

OFF SWITCH

written by

Tom Stohlgren

Based on his novel with the same title

Representation:
Eleni Larchanidou, LLM
Literary & Talent Manager
GREECE: +30-697-9619813
(WhatsApp, Viber)
USA: +1-714-702-5507
movieselenilllm2014@gmail.com
Mobile: (970) 217-4498
Registered, WGAw

FADE IN:

INT. FLANNIGAN'S IRISH PUB - DAY

SUPER: "Flannigan's Irish Pub, Los Angeles, California,
February 16, 2001"

NARRATOR

Some say the distance a man falls
is measured by the number of lives
ruined. Others say that is not the
distance he falls, but the degree
to which he bounces back.

An amiable 28-year-old high school science teacher, EVAN
DOHERTY, BURSTS into the southern California bar. He has
papers to grade. The patrons greet him with CHEERS. A burly
barkeep, KEVIN, has his beer poured and waiting.

EVAN

Friday night. What a week.

KEVIN

Will ya have one beer then,
Doherty?

EVAN

(in an Irish brogue)
Indeed, I will.

Evan is HEARTBROKEN as he grades papers with a red pen. We
see some of the grades: C-, D+, F.

KEVIN

And how's that daughter of yours?

EVAN

The chuisle mo chroi. The pulse of
my heart.

KEVIN

(to everyone)
For you non-Gaelic heathens, that's
pronounced khwish-la muh khree.

(to Evan)

And those simian students of yours?

EVAN

Random chance would do as well on
my multiple choice tests.

KEVIN

Bad as that? No child left behind?

EVAN

We teach them what to think, not how to think. No child left with a mind.

KEVIN

Better call Mary and tell her you'll be late. Traffic is something terrible.

Kevin REACHES behind the bar and HAULS UP a brick-like cell phone with a long antenna.

EVAN

Wow, 1990 technology, on February the sixteenth, 2001.

Evan DIALS his home number and WAITS.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Probably at church again. Six to ten times a week now.

Evan hands back the phone, sips his beer, and returns to grading papers. D-, C-, D+. His disappointment shows.

KEVIN

Mary is a good woman, Doherty. Nine years sober.

Two old patrons at the bar RAISE their glasses to salute. Evan RAISES his.

EVAN

W.C. Fields once said, 'It was a woman that drove me to drink, and I never stopped to thank her.'

CHEERS and LAUGHTER fill the bar, as Evan returns to grading. The traffic on the TV WORSENS. A stranger, MR. SHARP, 35, disguised in an overcoat, in a back booth HOLDS UP a fifty dollar bill for Kevin.

STRANGER/MR. SHARP

Irish whiskey all around, on me. Two for W.C. Fields over there.

The evening SNEEKS up on Evan, who is SINGING limericks and SLURRING his words as the clock strikes 1 A.M.

EVAN

There once was a girl in some trouble, whose stomach was starting to bubble.

(MORE)

EVAN (CONT'D)

She was contrary, but I offered to marry, if her dowry was a wee more than doubled.

Evan FALLS from his bar stool, face first.

OLD PARTON #1

I'll give Doherty a nine-point-five on that dive. Smiling all the way down.

OLD PATRON #2

Too much splash. I give him a nine.

Kevin RACES in from the back room.

KEVIN

I called Mary an hour ago. Saints preserve us. Evan!

EXT. ST. MICHAEL'S REHAB CENTER - NIGHT

MARY DOHERTY'S car SCREECHES to a halt in front of a huge cross and set of white stucco buildings resembling a California mission.

A sign reads: St. Michael the Archangel Alcoholic Rehabilitation Center, Lancaster, CA. Est. 1952"

Mary doesn't look the wealthy 35-year-old socialite at 2 A.M. Twelve-year-old, MARTIE, SOBS uncontrollably. A tall buxom Gestapo-like administrator, CC CHAPMAN (40), MARCHES to the car with two burly nurses, MR. DIMAS (35) and MR. GASTON (35), behind her.

MARY

I'm Mary Doherty, here is my check. My husband, Evan, is lying in the back seat.

CC SWIPES the check and opens the back door.

CC

It sounds like he's been lying to you for many years. I'm Celeste Chapman. Everyone calls me CC. It's going to be a difficult four weeks for him. I can tell.

MARY

Convert him, and you'll cure him.

Mary FETCHES Evan's suitcase from the trunk for CC.

MARTIE

Is there anything I can do for my
daddy?

CC

Pray for him. Take him boys. He'll
be dorming with Ponch Flores. We'll
talk tomorrow Mrs. Doherty.

The two men CARRY Evan away in the night, as Mary slowly
drives off.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S. DORM ROOM. -- PRE-DAWN

Good-natured, simple-minded middle-aged house painter, PONCH
FLORES, SHAKES Evan vigorously to wake him. Evan STAGGERS to
his feet, and sees that it is DARK outside the window.

PONCH

It's past five. CC told me to get
you to breakfast.

EVAN

(slow, difficult)
Where am I? Who are you?

PONCH

I'm Ponch Flores, your assigned
buddy here at Saint Michael's in
Lancaster.

EVAN

Church? Lancaster?

PONCH

No. Rehab. For four weeks. Your
wife drove you here last night.

EVAN

Last thing I remember was peeing in
a bucket, with two guys holding me.

PONCH

I bet CC and Doc are testing your
pee. Come to breakfast.

Evan FOLLOWS Ponch like a zombie.

PONCH (CONT'D)

You're a first-weeker. There's
breakfast, chapel, group, lunch,
counseling, chapel...

EVAN
(interrupting, snickering)
You said chapel twice.

PONCH
There's a lot of chapel. Exercise,
dinner, chapel, and lights out.

EVAN
Sorry, I can't stay. I got
Martie's soccer game, and I teach
Monday.

Ponch SHAKES his head as he guides Evan to the one open seat in the back two tables of the cafeteria. Evan, in disbelief, GLARES around the table to see every walk of life: businessmen (mixed ages), a migrant worker (50), a tattooed punk (22), and a pregnant woman (32). Everyone SHOVELS in the pancakes and SLAMS down coffee. Behind Evan on the wall is a big sign that reads "Change comes slowest to those who fail."

EVAN (CONT'D)
I'm Evan Doherty. I'll be out of
here when I get a lift.

Everyone SMIRKS and SHAKES their heads. MR. RANDALL, 55, carpenter, PROUDLY speaks up.

MR. RANDALL
The pancakes and coffee are cold
'cause we get served last as first-
weekers.

The speaker on the ceiling above the table SQUEAKS.

CC (O.S.)
That's KP for you, Mr. Randall.

Mr. Randall STARES toward the speaker. A bell RINGS, and a speaker says: "CHAPEL". Ponch GRABS Evan's sleeve.

PONCH
Follow me. CC is waiting.

Ponch LEADS Evan out the back door, and across a manicured courtyard. Evan SEES the huge cross and the sign he missed in the middle of the night. A massive fresco shows the Archangel Michael SHOVING a sword in an evil angel. Ponch DRAGS Evan to the administration building, and down a hallway where two chairs sit outside CC's door.

PONCH (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 Someone's in there. Door's shut.

Ponch TURNS HIS EAR to the wall. Evan slowly follows suit.
 They HEAR a sobbing, male PATIENT #1 (55) BEGGING for mercy.

PATIENT #1 (O.S.)
 I beg you, one more chance.

CC (O.S.)
 You're a third-weeker. Satan won.

You've already lost your long-walk pass, library pass, and shopping privileges.

PATIENT #1 (O.S.)
 Don't call my wife. I'll...

CC (O.S.)
 (interrupting)
 Too late. I called her, your employer, and Pastor Blevins. You're out on the streets.

PATIENT #1 (O.S.)
 Oh God, no! God no!

CC (O.S.)
 God gave you chances. Pick up your things at the back door. Mr. Dimas, Mr. Gaston.
 (yells)
 Next.

INT. CC'S OFFICE - DAY

The door SWINGS open and the patient is ESCORTED out by two brute nurses, Mr. Dimas and Mr. Gaston. Evan sees the powerful, SMILING CC in a low-cut satin blouse and knock-off business suit. A wooden crucifix adorns her cleavage. Evan STARES at the cross as he COLLAPSES onto the couch.

CC
 Welcome, Mr. Doherty. Call me CC.
 (pointing at her eyes)
 Eye's up here, Mr. Doherty.

EVAN
 I'm sorry, but there's been a mistake. I need to be...

CC

(interrupting)

Here for the next four weeks,
according to wife, school
superintendent, and daughter.

You'll kick the habit with the help of our Lord God, or
you'll never see them again.

EVAN

Please hear me out. I don't drink
that much or that often. I'm a
teacher. I'm still...

CC

(interrupting)

Inebriated. You're a nightmare to
your family and a danger to
society. I don't like
intellectuals. They're the hardest
to turn. And, I hate atheists.
They're impossible to treat. If I
don't sign your certificate four
weeks from now, you lose
everything. Is that clear?

EVAN

But, Mary wouldn't...

CC

(interrupting)

Pay in advance? She did. I'm
legally obliged to tell you that
Mr. Sharp, our regular counselor,
is out doing church work for four
weeks. You'll see our temporary
psychologist, Dr. Marie Sanchez. We
don't care for each other. Doc
Hester is testing your urine now.
You'll see him later. He's very
busy and very old.

EVAN

But, I'm not even...

CC

(interrupting)

Catholic. You will be, or Saint
Michael's will have failed you.

EVAN

If I can just call her.

CC

Mary and I spoke this morning. She and Martie won't speak to you until you get phone privileges from me.

EVAN

But I'm not an alcoholic.

Evan loses his attention span, and GAZES aimlessly.

CC

Speak up, Mr. Doherty. Your denial is being recorded for medical reasons. The urine test will tell.

EVAN

(reading a sign on her wall)

'Alcoholism: an aimless nightmare walk-about on this flat earth.'

CC

That's right. You want to see your daughter again. Martie, is it?

Evan SINKS further into the couch.

EVAN

Yes, Ma'am.

CC STANDS up violently.

CC

Ma'am means bitch, Mr. Doherty. You just earned KP.

(yells)

Mr. Flores. Show Mr. Doherty around. Oh, Mr. Flores?

PONCH

Yes, Ma'am.

(cringes after the slip)

I'm sorry, CC I'm sorry.

CC

You missed Chapel. Are you determined to go to hell?

PONCH

(cringing)

But I was leading Mr. Doherty.

CC

You too. KP after lunch. You and your new buddy have a lot to learn.

PONCH

Yes, CC. The tour begins here, Mr. Doherty. Welcome to Saint Michael's.

Ponch GRABS Evan and pulls him out of the office.

CC

(yells)

Take Mr. Doherty to Doc for a blood test. Now, Mr. Flores.

CC FOLLOWS them to the lobby where patients mill in lounge chairs drinking coffee. CC GREETs them by name, and they see her as a SAVIOR.

EVAN

(whispering to Ponch)

What the hell kind of a place is this?

PONCH

(snickering childishly)

You said it, Mr. Doherty.

Ponch LEADS the zombie-like Evan out to the courtyard and over to small building in the back of the complex.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE - DAY

Ponch PULLS Evan into Doc Hester's modest medical office with two side rooms, one a tiny bedroom and bathroom, and the other with a solid metal door marked "DETOX". Evan SPOTS a chess table with two chairs by the window. Shrunken, old DOC HESTER (68) HOBBLER in from the bedroom.

DOC

Hi, Ponch. Who's this?

EVAN

I'm Evan Doherty. Came in last night.

DOC

Yes, that's what CC said. Ponch, you may go.

PONCH

But, I'm supposed to stay with...

DOC
(interrupting)
Tell to kitchen cooks I sent you
for sweet rolls and coffee to raise
your blood sugar.

PONCH
Sweet rolls.

Ponch SMILES his way out the door. Doc STUDIES Evan's face.

DOC
Rough night?

EVAN
The worst.

DOC
I need to draw some blood.

EVAN
I understand.

Doc EXAMINES Evan's blood pressure, pulse, and heart. Doc's
hands shake as he DRAWS blood. Evan LOOKS to the chess table.

EVAN (CONT'D)
You live here?

DOC
In the back.

EVAN
What's the Detox room?

DOC
Let's hope you won't find out. We
test for drugs, prescription meds,
vitamin D, common sexually
transmitted diseases, and alcohol.

EVAN
Alcohol? It was last night.

DOC
Most DUI's are given the next
morning.

EVAN
I'm sure my blood will be fine.

DOC
CC doesn't like you.

EVAN

I'm a science teacher and an atheist.

DOC

And a drunk. She lost her husband from drinking. Sober twenty years. She's helped more than a few patients here.

Doc FEELS Evan's skull for bumps.

EVAN

Phrenology?

DOC

Ahh. A man of science. Ha! Just had to check.

EVAN

I'm a high school teacher: science, biology, elementary statistics.

DOC

Science is the great antidote to the poison of enthusiasm and superstition.

Evan PERKS UP.

EVAN

Adam Smith, from the Wealth of Nations, 1776.

Doc LEANS in closer to Evan.

DOC

(whispers)

Some ideas are not safe here. Some ideas are best kept in the safe.

Doc HOBBLER over to a small safe in the corner of the office. He PULLS OUT dozens of OLD NOTEBOOKS.

EVAN

What's in the notebooks?

DOC

Forty years of blood data, which CC knows about.

EVAN

And?

DOC
 Patient interviews on beliefs,
 emotional status, and other notes,
 of which CC would not approve. May
 I ask you a few questions?

EVAN
 Why not? It's for science, right?

DOC
 Do you believe in spiritual
 healing?

EVAN
 No.

DOC
 That people can be possessed by the
 devil?

EVAN
 No.

Evan shakes his head 'no' for a litany of questions.

DOC
 Do you believe in ESP? Ghosts?
 Telepathy? Clairvoyance? Astrology?
 Extraterrestrial beings?
 (in a deep voice)
 Angels? The devil? God?

Each time, Evan shakes his head 'no'.

EVAN
 Looks like a I got a zero on
 today's pop quiz.

Ponch BURSTS into Doc's office and sits in a chair at the
 chess table. Seconds later, the two burly nurses STOMP in.

MR. DIMAS
 CC says Mr. Doherty must see the
 psychiatrist, now.

DOC
 Psychologist.

MR. GASTON
 Whatever.

Mr. Dimas and Mr. Gaston HAUL Evan out the room.

PONCH
What do I do?

MR. DIMAS AND MR. GASTON
Chapel.

Dimas and Gaston DRAG Evan across the courtyard, and into the Administration building. As they pass CC's office, she JUMPS OUT to interrogate Evan.

CC
How was your examination, Mr. Doherty?

EVAN
Fine. Vital signs and blood.

CC
Discussions?

EVAN
Chess. We both like chess.

CC
(angrily)
Take him to Dr. Sanchez.

Dimas and Gaston HAUL Evan down two hallways to an unmarked door. They LEAN Evan against the door and leave.

INT. DR. SANCHEZ'S OFFICE - DAY

Marie Sanchez (26) is a jovial, Latina intellectual, fresh out of graduate school. Evan finally sees the name plate on the door, covered with a note that reads: 'MARIE SANCHEZ, come in.' Evan KNOCKS.

MARIE
Waiting on you, Evan Doherty.

Evan opens the door to a CLOUD of marijuana smoke, enters, and quickly shuts the door. Marie is READING his file.

EVAN
I'm ... oh, you know.

MARIE
May I call you Evan? I'm more fond of the people I treat than the boss I work for.

EVAN
(sleepily)
Oh.

MARIE
I'm just gaining practical
experience, while waiting for
universities to hire women and
minorities. What brings you here?

EVAN
We have two counselors at the high
school. It's a wonder they haven't
killed each other.

Marie SQUINTS her eyes wondering why Evan evaded the
question. She HANDS him a long test and pencil.

MARIE
I do the standard evaluation of a
hundred questions on drug and
alcohol use, feelings, family, and
education. The usual. Honesty
helps.

EVAN
I'm kind of tired today...

MARIE
(demandingly)
And a short IQ test at the end.
Mind if I burn incense? It keeps CC
and her bulldogs, Dimas and Gaston,
out.

Evan quickly fills in the questionnaire. An hour later, he is
FAST ASLEEP in the chair. Marie is TYPING data into her new
DELL INSPIRON LAPTOP COMPUTER when Evan SNAPS AWAKE.

EVAN
What? Where am I?

MARIE
You finished the questionnaire and
IQ test in record time, and fell
asleep. I let you sleep.

EVAN
Thanks, Doctor...?

MARIE
It's Marie.

EVAN

Wow. Is that one of those new laptop computers?

MARIE

Top of the line Dell Inspiron Five-thousand, thirty-gig hard drive, fully packed.

They HEAR the footsteps of Dimas and Gaston. Marie FOLDS AND HIDES the laptop as they barge in the door.

MR. DIMAS

Hustle up, Doherty.

MR. GASTON

Miss Chapel and you don't get lunch.

EVAN

I could use the sleep.

MR. DIMAS

CC wants the results, Sanchez.

Dimas and Gaston PULL Evan passed CC's office on the way to the courtyard. CC POKES out.

CC

How was counseling, Mr. Doherty? Do I smell smoke?

EVAN

Incense. Counseling was fine, Ma'am.

CC

That's KP after dinner for you and your buddy, Mr. Flores. Mr. Dimas, tell Dr. Sanchez I want to see her.

MR. DIMAS

Yes, CC.

INT. CC'S OFFICE - DAY

CC GLARES across her desk. Marie is SMILING and POLITE.

CC

You realize that you need a strong letter of recommendation from me to get that dream professor job.

MARIE

Thank you for reminding me.

CC

What were Mr. Doherty's test results?

MARIE

I'm can share the state test results. However, doctor-patient confidentiality precludes...

CC

(interrupting)

A Latino lesbian fired from a job doesn't bode well for a professor job. Just the test results then.

MARIE

Binge drinker, not daily drinker. No off switch. Parents drank a lot. Loved gin more than their son.

CC

And the IQ test?

MARIE

Top three percent. And he was tired. Very tired. He's a smart one, that Mr. Doherty.

CC

Too smart. See that he gets extra religious counseling. Alcoholics who refuse redemption...

MARIE

(reading from the wall)

are destined to endure an inescapable, self-inflicted hell, an aimless nightmare walk-about on this flat earth.

CC

He needs the simplicity of a higher power. So do you. That will be all, Dr. Sanchez.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Evan is SLOUCHING in the back pew of the darkest place on earth. Old FATHER FRANCIS (72) delivers the same sermon daily.

FATHER FRANCIS
Great Archangel Michael, defend us
against the devil's alcohol.

GROUP
Amen.

Evan is SLOW to respond correctly.

FATHER FRANCIS
Can you fight Satan alone?

GROUP
No, Father.

FATHER FRANCIS
You've tried to fight Satan alone,
and you have failed.

GROUP
Yes, Father.

FATHER FRANCIS
We'll go over the Twelve Steps.
One.

GROUP
We admit we are powerless over
alcohol.

FATHER FRANCIS
Two.

GROUP
I came to believe that a power
greater than ourselves could
restore me to sanity.

FATHER FRANCIS
And that power is Our Lord Jesus
Christ, and no other. Three.

GROUP
We turn our lives over to God.

Suddenly a businessman, BERNIE BRENBAUM (49) FALLS into the
isle and a bottle SHATTERS on the marble floor.

MR. RANDALL
Bernie Brenbaum fell off the wagon
and out of pew at the same time.

There is mixed laughter, snickers, and disgust from the
patients.

FATHER FRANCIS

Take him to CC's office.

(yells)

Four.

Try as he might, Evan cannot concentrate or STAY AWAKE. He WAKES UP some time later to see Father Francis STANDING beside him. Everyone else is at lunch.

EVAN

Sorry, Padre. Tired I guess.

FATHER FRANCIS

You remind me of someone. It was 1957. I was a young novitiate at Saint Augustine's. A bright young man stumbled into my confessional, sloppy drunk, and crazy from cocaine. But he asked Jesus Our Lord for help. My family paid for his rehab, right here at Saint Michael's. Do you know who that young man was?

EVAN

Uh. No.

FATHER FRANCIS

A man we all love: Doc Hester.

EVAN

Oh.

FATHER FRANCIS

I read your file. You need God's help to return to your family, my son. It's as simple as that. You need every one of the twelve steps, but one most of all.

EVAN

Yes, sir. Twelve steps. One big one.

FATHER FRANCIS

Only God-fearing people survive this place. Four or five people wash out of Saint Michael's every week, like Mr. Brenbaum. Don't be one of them.

EVAN

Four or five per week? I'm not an alcoholic, I just had a bad night.

FATHER FRANCIS
(shaking his head)
Back to step one, are we?

EVAN
If I can just call...

FATHER FRANCIS
(interrupting)
Mary? She called me. Converting is
your only option, my son.

EVAN
How come everybody has talked to my
wife, but me?

FATHER FRANCIS
(checking his watch)
I'm sure you're a fine lad. Still,
you were late, and sleeping in
Chapel, so I can't give you a lunch
token today. Maybe tomorrow.

Ponch SHOWS UP at the back of the chapel, and helps Evan to
his feet.

PONCH
You missed lunch, and KP. Now we
have it tomorrow for all three
meals.

EVAN
Sorry, Ponch.

Ponch PULLS an APPLE from his pocket and hands it to Evan.

PONCH
If you get caught taking food from
the cafeteria, you miss two meals.

EVAN
Thanks, Ponch.

PONCH
CC told me to get you showered and
cleaned up. She wants to see you
before Group.

EVAN
Great. And what's Group?

Ponch LEADS Evan back to his dorm room.

PONCH

Group therapy. My favorite 'cause you're not alone. It's a great way to make friends.

INT. EVAN'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Two uncomfortable twin beds are separated by a sink and mirror. Evan's suitcase is under the bed. He FINDS clean clothes, an alarm clock, and some bathroom supplies.

EVAN

Great. No electric razor. No shaving cream.

PONCH

The showers are down the hall. We have twenty minutes, so hurry, or we could lose dinner privileges.

Ponch watches as his buddy CUTS himself several times with a cheap disposable razor. Soon, Evan is showered, in clean clothes, and trying to keep up with Ponch across the courtyard.

PONCH (CONT'D)

At least you smell better.

EVAN

Thanks, Ponch. What's next?

PONCH

Free coffee and cookies in the lobby.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Ponch and Evan enter the lobby and are greeted with CHEERS by the other patients. Coffee and cookies FILL a table.

Ponch is extremely happy. Evan GULPS down hot coffee. He STARES at three pay phones on the back wall, each with a line of patients. The sign reads: "Maximum call: Three minutes. No exceptions."

EVAN

Ponch, can I borrow a quarter?

PONCH

CC matches the phone numbers. You would lose phone privileges for two weeks. So would I, 'cause...

EVAN
 (interrupting)
 'Cause you're my buddy.

PONCH
 (smiles)
 Yep. You're my buddy. Maybe you
 should ask CC.

Evan TRUDGES to CC's office, where Mr. Dimas and Mr. Gaston
 are sitting in the chairs like armed guards.

EVAN
 Hi, fellas. Could I ask CC a quick
 question?

CC (O.S.)
 Come in, Mr. Doherty.

INT. CC'S OFFICE - DAY

CC greets Evan at the door, STANDING UNCOMFORTABLY CLOSE to
 him. Evan's hair is still ringing wet.

CC
 You clean up nicely, Mr. Doherty.
 Mr. Dimas, fetch Mr. Doherty a
 towel for his hair, and, let me
 guess, some shaving cream?

EVAN
 Thanks. That would be great. I
 could use your...

CC
 (interrupting)
 Help. Yes, you can. You're in for
 the fight of your life. You've told
 Doc Hester, Dr. Sanchez, and Father
 Francis that you're not an
 alcoholic, is that right?

EVAN
 If I can just make one phone call
 to...

CC
 (interrupting)
 Mary, the woman you've loved so
 much that you made her pick you up
 off a putrid bar floor at 2 A.M.?
 (MORE)

CC (CONT'D)

Or did you want to call Martie, the step-daughter you say you love, but you love beer and Irish whiskey more, don't you, Mr. Doherty?

EVAN

If I could just talk to Mary and straighten this whole thing out, I would be...

CC

(interrupting)

Out of my hair? Or out the non-refundable seven-thousand dollars? Instantly cured are you, Mr. Doherty?

EVAN

(angrily)

Even prisoners get one phone call.

CC

Fine, Mr. Doherty. Here, use my phone. I'll put it on speaker.

Evan slowly dials the number, and TURNS his face to the wall as MARY answers.

BEGIN PHONE CONVERSATION

MARY (O.S.)

Hello?

EVAN

Mary, I'm so sorry about last night.

(beat)

And the other nights, I guess.

MARY (O.S.)

Is CC there?

EVAN

Yes. I'm on the speaker. Mary, I've learned my lesson, I...

MARY (O.S.)

(angrily)

Abandoned God and your family for the bottle. Been there. Done that. We'll not watch you kill yourself and this family.

EVAN
Mary, please.

MARY (O.S.)
If you return to Catholicism,
complete the rehab as a model
patient, and give up alcohol for
life, you will be welcome back in
our home. On this, CC, Father
Francis, and I agree. God help you,
Evan. I'm hanging up.

EVAN
Wait. I love you. Please tell
Martie that I love her too. I can
change...

END PHONE CONVERSATION

CLICK. Evan holds the phone in disbelief. CC stands close to
Evan, takes the phone, and hangs it up.

CC
(compassionately)
We all want to help you in your
time of need, Mr. Doherty. You say
that you're not an alcoholic, but
your own answers on the
questionnaire show otherwise.

EVAN
(still stunned)
Huh?

CC
Do you have more than two drinks
when you drink? You answered
'yes'.

Do you sometimes have more than five drinks in an evening?
You answered 'yes'. Do you sneak liquor in your own home?
'Yes'. Drink before noon? 'Yes'.

EVAN
I might have a nip before a cold
soccer game.

CC
Do you drive after having a few
drinks? 'Yes'. You're an
intelligent man, Mr. Doherty. High
school teacher and role model?
(her tone darkens)
(MORE)

CC (CONT'D)

But you're no different than any Tom, Dick, or Sherry that comes to Saint Michael's. Pray to God that you can beat this thing. Admit it.

Mr. Dimas returns with a TOWEL and some SHAVING CREAM. Ponch waits outside the door.

CC (CONT'D)

You can work-off the shaving cream. Mr. Flores, take your buddy to Group.

Ponch LEADS a stunned Evan to Group therapy in one of two rooms off the lobby. Evan is shedding a few TEARS, and moves a hand to WIPE them away. Ponch GRABS his arm.

PONCH

Don't bother wiping your tears. There will be plenty more soon.

INT. GROUP THERAPY - DAY

Two dozen fold up chairs form a tight circle. Two seats are open. Ponch takes one, and MOTIONS for Evan to take the other. JASON (46), a milkman, proudly STANDS. Evan is speechless.

JASON

I'm Jason Wilson, and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP

Hi, Jason.

JASON

I'm a second-weeker. I used to drink a six-pack of beer every night for four years, and I didn't know I had problem until it became a twelve-pack. I started missing my morning milkman job. I got pulled over three times with DUI's and got fired. Took a cab to Saint Michael's. I want my life back.

MR. RANDALL

Good job, Mr. Wilson.

PATIENT #2

You mean, no-job, Mr. Wilson.

Jason sits down. BILL, 46, a businessman, STANDS.

BILL

I'm Bill Fennick from Fennick's Furniture Warehouse, and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP

Hi, Bill.

BILL

I drank, fooled around. My wife divorced me. Cleaned me out. I drank more. Saint Christopher showed me the way to Saint Michael's.

Bill SITS down. GEORGIA, 30, a young housewife, STANDS.

GEORGIA

I'm Georgia Cunningsly, and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP

Hi, Georgia.

GEORGIA

I got a DUI after almost killing a little boy. I would regret that my whole life. Jesus is my driver now.

GROUP

Amen.

Evan is STUNNED by his wife's call, and he is OBLIVIOUS to the group, until CRYSTAL stands. She looks like a twelve-year-old meth addict from skid row.

CRYSTAL

I'm Crystal, and I'm addicted to meth and alcohol.

GROUP

Hi, Crystal.

EVAN

Poor kid.

CRYSTAL

Nobody forced me to take drugs, drink, or sell my body for meth and tequila. Doc says I have a problem with my liver, and I need a kidney. I'll be going to the hospital soon. I'm a second-weeker.

MR. RANDALL
God help ya, Crystal.

GROUP
Amen.

Crystal smiles, EXPOSING rotten brown teeth. She sit down as the TEARS FLOW from everyone. LARRY JENSEN, 40, an intelligent looking gentleman STANDS.

LARRY
I'm Larry Jensen, a third-grade teacher, and I'm an alcoholic.

Evan looks up painfully.

GROUP
(including Evan)
Hi, Larry.

LARRY
I lost my only daughter in a car accident two years ago. I was driving. I drank to hide the pain. It didn't work. But, I'm a fourth-weeker. I get out tomorrow.

EVAN
You get to go home?

LARRY
No. My wife took it. I get out, that's all.

Soon, ALL EYES are on Evan. He slowly STANDS.

EVAN
I'm Evan Doherty. I had a bad night and my wife picked me up from the bar and took me here.

The group is SPEECHLESS. Pity FILLS the room.

EVAN (CONT'D)
I teach high school science, biology, and sh-tatistics. One bad night.
(beat)
That's all.

Suddenly the door FLIES OPEN and Mr. Dimas and Mr. Gaston RACE over to Evan.

MR. DIMAS
Mr. Doherty, come with us.

GROUP
(whispers and snickers)
Detox.

MR. GASTON
Go about your session. Mr.
Doherty's in a bit of trouble.

EVAN
Trouble? What could be worse?

Dimas and Gaston HAUL Evan away like a prisoner.

PONCH
(mumbles, worried)
Detox.

INT. DETOX ROOM - DAY

Behind the metal door with a small window, the room looks like a PADDED CELL. On a small, uncomfortable bed with plastic sheets, Evan is HELD down by Dimas and Gaston, as Doc Hester takes more blood. Dimas forcibly REMOVES Evan's belt and shoelaces.

EVAN
What's going on, Doc?

DOC
State law. Your blood had a point-one-eight alcohol level, long after you were brought in.

MR. DIMAS
You're considered a health risk and a suicide risk.

MR. GASTON
You were drunk the whole time.

EVAN
What's going to happen to me?

DOC
Isolation for two more nights,
blood tests every four hours.

Dimas and Gaston leave the chamber LAUGHING.

EVAN
Plastic sheets?

DOC
Vomiting and diarrhea.

EVAN
I have neither.

DOC
You will after you take these.

Doc HANDS Evan two large pills and a glass of thick, lumpy fluid. Evan is RELUCTANT.

DOC (CONT'D)
You disappoint me, Mr. Doherty. I thought you would be different.

Evan stubbornly takes the pills, and PASSES OUT. Doc leaves.

Four hours later, at 6 P.M., Doc is PULLING on Evan's arm. He awakens.

SUPER: "Four hours later, 6 P.M."

EVAN
I thought you said the pills would make me...

Evan LEAPS to the bathroom where horrible SOUNDS escape.

Evan TRUDGES to the bed. Doc SHOVES Evan's face in a waste paper basket as he violently PUKES. Seconds later, he is asleep again. Doc DRAWS blood.

Four hours pass. Doc's SHAKING HAND is giving Evan a shot in the arm.

SUPER: "Four hours later, 10 P.M."

DOC
I don't have the strength for this.
I need my sleep. So do you.

The night passes. At 6 A.M., Doc is LABELING three blood samples when Evan WAKES UP.

DOC (CONT'D)
6 P.M., 10 P.M., and 2 A.M.

EVAN
Morning, Doc. What are you doing?

DOC
Helping a fellow man of science.

EVAN
Your shaking hand last night?

DOC
Parkinson's. The real illness is yours, but I have faith in you.

EVAN
I wish my wife and daughter did.

DOC
Intelligence or beliefs didn't spare me from Parkinson's, or drugs.

EVAN
I get it. You think I'm an alcoholic.

Doc PULLS a chair next to Evan.

DOC
There's a lot we don't know about alcoholism: genetic predisposition, environment, psychology...

EVAN
(interrupting)
What do we know?

DOC
Alcoholics have smaller brain volumes than their counterparts.

EVAN
Really?

DOC
Children of alcoholic moms have smaller brains before they've even taken a drink.

EVAN
That's horrible.

DOC
The child of two alcoholics has a fifty-fifty chance of...

EVAN
(interrupting)
Both my parents drank.

DOC
Many think it's all psychological.
(beat)
Solved by repentance, counseling,
prayer, and meetings, but...

EVAN
(interrupting, sharing)
It's caused by desire for immediate
gratification, social belonging,
for hope, or for power. I know.

DOC
Exactly, but I have another theory.

EVAN
(worried)
A theory.

DOC
The disease aspect may be related
to Korsakoff's Syndrome, and two
types of chemically induced
amnesia, retrograde and anterograde
amnesia. I'm interested in the
latter.
(beat)
The *off switch*.

EVAN
Huh?

DOC
What if certain chemical signals
could prevent a person from taking
that third drink?

EVAN
An *off switch*. I see.

DOC
What if some people, genetically
predisposed to Korsakoff's and
vitamin-D deficiencies, got a
simple pill to help their off
switch?

EVAN
What can I do?

DOC

Two things. Recognize alcoholism as a disease requiring prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment.

EVAN

And?

DOC

Realize that you have that disease. Get some sleep after breakfast. I need to race these samples to the lab. There's coffee and breakfast in my office.

Evan does as he is told. At 9:30 A.M., Doc ENTERS the room with an electric razor and a change of clothes for Evan.

DOC (CONT'D)

Quickly, shower and clean up. They should be here for you soon.

Again, Evan does as he is told.

EVAN

What did you give me to clean me out?

DOC

Laxatives and Ipecac. Poor-man's stomach pump. Our secret. Then I post-dated the blood and had the results sent to CC. You'll look clean as an altar boy.

Evan is CLEANED UP and ready to go when Mr. Dimas and Mr. Gaston STORM in.

MR. DIMAS

Doherty gets out of Detox. He's clean.

MR. GASTON

CC says that one high reading must have been bad, all the others are low.

DOC

She's the boss.

EVAN

Thanks, Doc. But what about your theory?

Doc yells as Dimas and Gaston HAUL Evan across the courtyard.

DOC

Do what you must to return home!

Evan looks PERPLEXED and ABANDONED again. CC GREETs him in the courtyard.

CC

Sorry about the Detox assignment. I saw the other blood results. They could not have dropped so quickly.

And, luckily for you, Doc took extra blood to rerun the tests.

EVAN

Yes, luckily.

CC

And Dr. Sanchez confirmed that no one could pass that IQ test drunk.

EVAN

True. I guess.

CC

Doc didn't give you anything?

EVAN

A stern talking too. He let me use his electric razor. That's all.

CC

He wasn't supposed to do that. But he forgets who's in charge. Hurry to Chapel, Mr. Doherty.

EVAN

Yes...CC. Thanks.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

It is like stepping back in time. BLARING organ music plays behind Father Francis. Evan takes a seat in the back row.

FATHER FRANCIS

Four.

GROUP

We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

FATHER FRANCIS

Five.

GROUP

We admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs, sins, and failings.

Evan listens to Father Francis and the patients like an outsider, looking in.

EVAN

(mumbling to himself)

None of us has an *off switch*. We all have the desire for immediate gratification, but there is little gratification the next day. Belonging? To what? A bunch of drunks. Hope or power? There is no hope or power served in a bottle.

The background organ music gets LOUDER, but patients near Evan clearly HEAR him.

EVAN (CONT'D)

What's my ticket home: to fake it. Go along with the program. Become Catholic, repent, and beg Mary for forgiveness. If I bomb out, I got nothing. That's it. The twelve steps. I'll do it. Piece of cake.

Before he realizes it, Chapel is over, and Father Francis is HANDING OUT lunch tokens. Evan STUMBLES up next to the padre.

FATHER FRANCIS

I'm sorry my son. You forgot your notebook with the rules, schedule, and twelve step program. And you have to write in your personal journal every day. It's the law.

EVAN

I didn't know. I was in Detox.

FATHER FRANCIS

You have to memorize the twelve steps. If asked by anyone, from CC to the kitchen staff, and if you don't know them, you get KP. Do you know the twelve steps, my son?

EVAN
I just got here.

CC and Ponch WALK UP behind Evan.

CC
I'm afraid you just earned KP for you and your buddy. Take responsibility, Mr. Doherty.

EVAN
(mumbling)
Step Three is turning our lives over to God. Looks like He's responsible. Now, she says, I'm responsible.

CC
I heard that. KP at dinner, the two of you.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

As the lunch bell RINGS, Evan and Ponch put on WHITE APRONS in the kitchen.

EVAN
Sorry about this, Ponch.

PONCH
I don't mind. Grab the big can and follow me.

Ponch shows Evan how to CLEAR TABLES with a garbage can, and WASH DISHES, while eating scraps off the patient's plates.

PONCH (CONT'D)
So you have to memorize the blue notebook: the rules, the A.A. steps, and the religious stuff.

EVAN
Verbatim?

PONCH
Huh?

EVAN
Do you have to memorize it word-for-word?

PONCH

I guess so. That's why I always get KP.

They scrub and laugh, until the next bell RINGS.

PONCH (CONT'D)

Group.

Evan RACES to his dorm room and finds his notebook under his pillow. He RACES to Group, determined to be a model patient.

INT. GROUP THERAPY - DAY

Business people (mixed ages) to neighborhood moms (mixed aged) circle the chairs to confess, repent, and change lives. MIKE (55), a Banker in a nice suit, STANDS.

MIKE

I had it all and lost it all. I'm Mike, and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP

Hi, Mike.

MIKE

Sober twenty years before giving in to my inner drunk again. Job, wife, savings, retirement, gone. One thousand bucks of booze, lost a million, but I miss my wife more.

GROUP

Amen.

Evan quickly RISES to take a turn.

EVAN

I'm Evan, and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP

(grumbling)

Hi, Evan.

EVAN

I got off on the wrong foot, and I'm sorry. I'm an idiot with a lot to learn.

MR. RANDALL

So, tell us a personal secret.

EVAN
I used to sneak whiskey on cold mornings.

PATIENT #2
Not much of a secret.

EVAN
Then, I'd drive my daughter and her friends to their soccer games.

MR. RANDALL
You endangered their lives.

PATIENT #2
You're trash, Evan, just like us.

EVAN
Hey, am I on trial here?

MR. RANDALL
You were on trial out there, teacher. You failed the test.

A bell RINGS. A speaker SQUAWKS.

CC (O.S.)
One-on-one time.

Everyone pairs up quickly. No one PICKS Evan. The Banker, Mike, pulls Evan aside.

MIKE
For a teacher, you're a stupid son -of-a-bitch. You escape Detox two days early somehow. Nobody trusts you.

EVAN
Point taken, but I...

MIKE
(yells)
Mr. Doherty, please recite the twelve steps.

Everyone STOPS TALKING to listen. Evan SQUIRMS, and STAMMERS.

EVAN
Step One. I, I forgot.

GROUP
KP.

Another bell RINGS. The speaker CRACKLES.

CC (O.S.)
Chapel.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Evan is MEMORIZING the twelve steps without letting on that he's reading his notebook in the last pew.

FATHER FRANCIS
Six.

GROUP
We're entirely ready to have God
remove all these defects of
character.

FATHER FRANCIS
Keep up in the back. Seven.

GROUP
Humbly ask Him to remove our
shortcomings.

FATHER FRANCIS
Are you listening, first-weekers?

Evan LOOKS UP from his notebook to see Father Francis at the end of his pew, GLARING at him.

FATHER FRANCIS (CONT'D)
Eight. Mr. Doherty?

EVAN
Um. Um.

FATHER FRANCIS
KP, Mr. Doherty. Eight?

Evan looks pitiful. He SLUMPS in the pew.

GROUP
Make a list of all persons we
harmed, and be willing to make
amends to them all.

Soon, everyone is dismissed for dinner. Evan REMAINS behind.

EVAN
Sorry Father. I broke a rule by
reading in Chapel.

FATHER FRANCIS

Rules. They're as easily broken as commandments around here, my son.

EVAN

I'll try harder, Father.

FATHER FRANCIS

You can't do it alone. Half of the twelve steps have God in them.

EVAN

Yes, Father. I see that, now.

FATHER FRANCIS

(smiling)

We're always a little tougher on first-weekers. Pray. After KP.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Evan and Ponch SCRAPE plates, WASH pots and pans, and EAT scraps of food.

EVAN

I'll just stay out of trouble, and memorize the twelve steps. Almost done.

PONCH

I just smile a lot, and leave my crucifix out, so they don't ask me. The letters are hard.

Evan PAUSES. Ponch AVOIDS eye contact.

EVAN

Ever tested for dyslexia?

PONCH

I tell people I need glasses. They read things to me.

Ponch GRABS a filthy spaghetti pot from Evan and SCRUBS as hard as he can.

EVAN

I greatly appreciate your help, Ponch. I'll make it up to you.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

SUPER: "Two Nights Later"

Evan and Ponch enter the lobby confidently after another two nights of KP. The blowhard fourth-weeker, ARCHIE, 58, awaits in a large group, ready to POUNCE.

ARCHIE
Know the twelve steps yet?

EVAN
Sure do. Let's get it over with.

ARCHIE
I was addressing Mr. Flores.

Ponch SHAKES in fear. A crowd GATHERS.

EVAN
We'll do them together. Start us off, Ponch.

PONCH
(nervously)
Ssssss. Step One...

EVAN AND PONCH
(Ponch parrots Evan)
We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.

PONCH
Powerless, that's right. Step Two.

Ponch remains a half-syllable behind Evan throughout the twelve steps. The crowd CHEERS on Ponch despite the charade.

Dimas and Gaston sneak into the group.

MR. DIMAS
Congratulations, Mr. Flores, and Mr. Doherty.

MR. GASTON
You get the red stamp.

Mr. Dimas HANDS Evan and Ponch a St. Michael's business card with a red stamp on each. For Ponch, it's a DREAM COME TRUE. Archie STORMS OUT of the lobby. The crowd knows Evan helped his buddy. They CHEER for them both.

PONCH
They can't test us again?

EVAN
No. You did it, Ponch.
Congratulations. Coffee is on me.

INT. CC'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "Evan Completes Week 1"

Evan is PACING in the office. Ponch LISTENS in from outside.

EVAN
But I deserve phone privileges to
call home. I'm a second-weeker now.

CC
We can't count your day in Detox.
You'll have to wait until tomorrow.

EVAN
But the blood test was faulty.

CC
Rules are rules, Mr. Doherty.

Evan doesn't see that CC is SMILING as he leaves.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

SUPER: The next day, Sunday. 8:30 A.M.

Evan is ANXIOUS, and fifth in line at one of the pay phones.

Finally, he makes his call home and gets the recorder.

EVAN
Mary, Martie, I love you. I'm sorry
I put you through this. It was very
selfish of me.
(upbeat)
I'm a second-weeker now. Three
weeks to go, and I'll be home. It's
Sunday. Visiting hours are two to
five P.M. Are you coming out?

Evan HANGS UP looking at the long line behind him.

MR. RANDALL
Probably at church, is all.

Evan, dejected, GRABS paper and pen and begins a letter of apology. His hand SHAKES. The wobbly letter reads: Dearest Mary and Martie, It's my fault. I've never been so alone."

Evan watches the clock in the lobby from two to five P.M. He makes yet another phone call. This time, Mary answers.

BEGIN PHONE CONVERSATION

MARY (O.S.)

Hello?

EVAN

I, I missed you today.

MARY (O.S.)

Sorry Evan, we were at church and counseling. We are so

(beat)

Angry.

EVAN

I know. It's my fault.

MARY (O.S.)

Your students have sent you get well cards.

EVAN

Can you bring them out?

MARY (O.S.)

(angrily)

You abandoned us for your so-called buddies at Flannigan's who were poisoning you.

EVAN

I'm so sorry.

MARY (O.S.)

Who is here to protect Martie and me if we get burglarized?

EVAN

I know, I'm sorry.

MARY (O.S.)

I'm sober nine years, thanks solely to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

EVAN

I've been to chapel every day. If that's what it takes, I'll do it.

MARY (O.S.)

We're not a prize you win by acting religious. My counselor says your not capable of accepting the power of God.

Mary HANGS UP. Ponch walks slowly up to Evan.

END PHONE CONVERSATION

PONCH

She's still very upset, is all.
I'll get us coffee.

EVAN

Thanks Ponch, but I'd better see Father Francis.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Father Francis SITS privately with one patient after another, until he finally gets to Evan in the back pew.

EVAN

Father, I need your help.

FATHER FRANCIS

You need the Lord's help.

EVAN

If you could just call my wife.

FATHER FRANCIS

CC does that sort of thing.

EVAN

She's a devout Catholic, as is my wife, and I'm just a...

FATHER FRANCIS

(interrupting)
Just a what, my son?

EVAN

Maybe it's a matter of degree.

FATHER FRANCIS

So, religion is just a matter of degree, is it?

EVAN

Ya know, like politics, commitment at work, and hobbies.

FATHER FRANCIS

Sorry, Mr. Doherty. There's no middle ground between heaven and hell.

EVAN

Like purgatory?

Father Francis is PERTURBED with Evan's arguing, but he SMILES compassionately knowing he is right.

FATHER FRANCIS

Anywhere outside the grace of God is hell, my son. When you convert and confess, I'll call your wife. It's that simple, my son.

Father Francis HOLDS his hands in prayer as a hint to Evan.

Evan begins to PRAY. Father Francis leaves. After a short time, Evan goes to the cafeteria.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Patient #2, 39, the picture of a drunk, has trouble presenting a lecture on the Delirium Tremens, with CC looking on from the back. Evan enters late, which CC notes with a GLARE. Everyone is STANDING.

PATIENT #2

CC gave me library privileges to look up the DT's or shakes that come in the second stage of alcoholism.

He pauses as his hand SHAKES.

CC

You're doing fine, continue.

PATIENT #2

The shakes come from alcohol withdrawal.

The patient STRUGGLES more.

CC

I said, continue.

PATIENT #2

Due to severe, neuro...

CC
(interrupting)
Neurological damage. Brain damage.

The difficult lecture continues as a new patient, an attractive 22-year-old patient, NICOLE SANDS, nudges next to Evan.

NICOLE
(whispering)
Mr. Doherty, is that you?

Evan STRUGGLES to remember the young girl.

EVAN
I'm sorry.

Nicole's hands are SHAKING, and she needs a hug, so she HUGS Evan.

NICOLE
Nicole Sands. I had you for science class and statistics.

EVAN
Nicole?

Evan is uneasy about continuing the HUG as he sees her arms show NEEDLE MARKS.

NICOLE
The old doctor here was shaking a lot as he drew my blood. My daddy put me here. I partied out of UCLA. Double embarrassment to Daddy.

EVAN
It's a strict four-week program, but you'll be fine.

NICOLE
(sobbing, hugging)
Will you be here to help me through? I'm so scared.

Dimas and Gaston BURST through the back door and RACE up to Nicole.

MR. DIMAS
Come with us, Ms. Sands.

MR. GASTON
You're going to Detox.

Dimas and Gaston HAUL Nicole away. She WEEPS hysterically.

EVAN
You'll be fine. You'll be okay.

INT. DR. SANCHEZ'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "Two days later"

Evan enters an office filled with a gray-green SMOKE.

EVAN
Dr. Sanchez?

Dr. Sanchez WAVES AWAY the smoke and shakes his hand.

MARIE
Call me Marie. What have you
learned about addictions?

EVAN
Many here smoke cigarettes. You
smoke.

MARIE
Quite the detective. What else?

EVAN
(avoiding eye contact)
I had the DTs. It scared me.

MARIE
Anything else?

EVAN
I need coffee. But I can beat this
addictive personality.

MARIE
What's motivating you? Don't want
to be psycho anymore?

EVAN
I know how much everyone wants me
to say I'm powerless, I need God,
and I need the twelve steps.

MARIE
But?

EVAN
I just want my family back.

MARIE
Let's talk science.

EVAN
What do psychologists think?

MARIE
People drink for immediate gratification, social acceptance, hope, and power. You know that.

EVAN
Can I read some research papers?

For the next hour, Evan DEVOURS a stack of science papers, while Marie TYPES into her laptop computer.

MARIE
So, that's it in a nutshell.

EVAN
You mean nutcase? The needed treatment is far more than we get in these rehab centers or from A.A.

MARIE
Right you are, Mr. Smarty-pants. It's part psychological, part genetics, and part physiology.

EVAN
But it still takes will power.

MARIE
The anti-addiction drugs don't work well, zyban, methadone, naltrexone.

EVAN
And anti-depressants are equally addictive, if not more so.

MARIE
So what are your chances in this psycho lottery?

EVAN
(laughs)
Not very good, unless I out-smart it. Thanks, Marie.

He HUGS her very hard.

MARIE
I'd bet on you.

Evan steps out of the office heading to the lobby when CC STOPS him.

CC
How was your session with Dr. Sanchez?

EVAN
She's the consummate professional, well-read, and insightful.

CC
Did the incense bother you?

EVAN
I find it calming, soothing.

CC
How are your twelve steps coming?

EVAN
Fine. Chapel's great. I'm learning.

CC
I see. What is your relationship with Ms. Nicole Sands?

EVAN
Former student, three years ago.

CC
You were hugging. Intimacy is against the rules. We have photos.

EVAN
Out of context. She was scared.

CC
I'd advise you to keep away from Ms. Sands during your stay here. If these pictures got out...

EVAN
(interrupting)
I'll keep my distance from her. So sorry.

Dimas and Gaston MARCH up to CC and Evan.

MR. DIMAS
Doc Hester wants Mr. Doherty.

MR. GASTON
Just a checkup.

CC
You'd better hurry, Mr. Doherty.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE - DAY

Evan RACES over to Doc's office. He EYES the Detox room as he enters. Doc READIES a blood-pressure cuff.

DOC
Shirt off. Arm out. Had any DTs?

EVAN
I've had the shakes. Oops.

DOC
Welcome to my world.

Evan NOTICES Doc is SHAKING MORE.

EVAN
You okay, Doc?

DOC
Anxiety sets my Parkinson's off.
You're recovering nicely.

EVAN
Physically, yes, but spiritually?

DOC
Take that up with Father Francis.

EVAN
Is it true religious people have a
slightly higher chance to recover?

Doc does not respond. He TURNS away, writing in a notebook.

EVAN (CONT'D)
I thought we were friends.

DOC
Many here are worse off than you.
Like that little girl in Detox.

EVAN
Nicole. She's just twenty-two.

DOC
Her liver is sixty-five. She has a
huge crush on you.

EVAN

She was a cheerleader. Could have had any boy in her class.

DOC

She wanted you. Another patient from the battlefield of life. I'm so tired of it all.

EVAN

How's she doing?

DOC

Not so good. I tried to help her the way I helped you. She got sicker and deathly emotional. I hope you can help her.

EVAN

CC said I had to stay away.

Doc UNLOCKS the Detox door. Nicole waits with OPEN ARMS for her savior.

NICOLE

Oh, Evan.

She CLINGS to him as she guides him back to the bed. She takes the last two steps alone, her BEAUTIFUL BACK showing through the hospital gown.

DOC

Back to bed young lady.

EVAN

I'd better be going.

Evan STARTS to walk out.

NICOLE

Doc, tell Evan what you told me.

DOC

It's part genetic, physiological, and behavioral.

Evan STOPS and TURNS to listen.

EVAN

In that order?

NICOLE

You're wrong, Doc. All I need is my bible. I need Father Francis.

EVAN

And you'll need to memorize your notebook. The twelve steps.

Doc TURNS and WALKS AWAY disappointed.

DOC

Time for Ms. Sands to rest.

EVAN

You get out of Detox tomorrow. I'll introduce you around.

NICOLE

Ten A.M. sharp. It's a date.

Doc LOCKS the door. He is DISAPPOINTED.

EVAN

I see that look, Doc. I want my wife and daughter back. Chapel is my ticket out of here.

DOC

From to bottle to the genie, is it?

EVAN

Maybe I need religion to stay sober. I don't know.

DOC

Right. Free will. Higher power.

EVAN

You're not making this easy for me, Doc.

DOC

Welcome to my battlefield, Evan.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Father Francis is HAPPY to see Evan in church yet again.

FATHER FRANCIS

You're making good progress, my son. Who else is helping you?

EVAN

Dr. Sanchez, Doc Hester, CC...

FATHER FRANCIS
 (interrupting)
 And?

Father Francis LEADS Evan to the St. Michael statue.

EVAN
 Oh, God, of course. Goes without
 saying. Right, Father?

FATHER FRANCIS
 Do you know much about Saint
 Michael?

EVAN
 I heard he's pretty high up there,
 for an angel that is.

FATHER FRANCIS
 CC is granting you library
 privilege tomorrow from nine-thirty
 A.M. to noon, for a lecture
 tomorrow night on Saint Michael.

EVAN
 But I'm not a third-weeker.

FATHER FRANCIS
 Mr. Flores can guide you. Call it a
 reward for recent efforts.

The dinner bell RINGS. Evan SMILES and YELLS while leaving.

EVAN
 You know how to get to me. I love
 libraries. I'll do a great talk.

Dinner, the nighttime, and breakfast seem to last a week.

Evan and Ponch WATCH THE CLOCK from 9 to 9:30 A.M. from the
 lobby. CC WAVES goodbye as Evan and Ponch walk away.

EXT./INT. WALKING TO LIBRARY AND INSIDE - DAY

EVAN
 This feels great. Freedom.

PONCH
 And unlimited phone calls from the
 library. These houses need paint.

EVAN
 Freedoms we take for granted.

PONCH
The garages need paint too.

EVAN
Researching the angels.

PONCH
Give me stucco over siding any day.

EVAN
We have to be back by lunch, or?

PONCH
Loss of phone and library, and we
get KP.

They LAUGH as they enter the library. The LIBRARIAN (55), a SMILING woman in an ankle-length skirt and buttoned-up blouse with a dangling wooden crucifix, WATCHES them intently. Evan CALLS home, but gets no answer. He JUMPS on a computer. Ponch looks over his shoulder, BEWILDERED.

EVAN
Listen to this, Michael was the
closest angel to God in Judaism.

PONCH
He's not Jewish, he's Catholic.

LIBRARIAN
(smiling)
Shhhh!

EVAN
(whispering)
He controlled rain, hail, snow,
wind, and thunder for God.

PONCH
Big jobs. CC's gonna like that.

EVAN
He defended Heaven from the Devil
and the bad angels. Zoroastrianism?

PONCH
Zorro, who? We have to get back.

EVAN
Wait! Doc wanted me to find out how
many people believe in Satan,
angels, ESP, and telepathy.

Ponch gets NERVOUS. The Librarian GIGGLES.

PONCH
CC's not gonna like that.

Evan SCRIBBLES notes furiously before leaving.

EVAN
I wonder why the all-powerful God
didn't kill Satan and the bad
angels right off the bat?

The librarian looks down at her crucifix.

LIBRARIAN
(whispers)
Good question.

PONCH
Specially if he had Zorro.

EVAN
No, it was Zoroasters three-
thousand years ago who invented
Michael and the archangels, long
before Christ.

The Librarian SMILES, but POINTS the noisy pair to the door.
Ponch TRIES not to listen as they RACE back.

PONCH
These houses need paint.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

CC, Dimas, and Gaston MEET Evan and Ponch returning.

CC
I hope you learned a lot for your
seminar.

EVAN
Yes, CC. Thanks for the library
privileges.

PONCH
We learned about Zorro.

CC
Just stick to Christian facts
tonight. You can leave out Zorro.

Evan and Ponch cross the lobby and see Nicole SOBBING.

EVAN

Oh my God, I was supposed to pick
you up at Detox. I'm so ...

Nicole THROWS HER ARMS around Evan. Others GASP.

NICOLE

I missed you so much.

We hear a CRACKLING sound from the speaker above.

CC (O.S.)

Ms. Sands, come to my office. Mr.
Doherty and Mr. Flores, KP.

During KP, Evan allows himself a SINFUL DAYDREAM of a
romantic interlude with Nicole in the Detox room.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

CC STANDS beside Evan at the front of the room as all the
patients FILTER IN for the "optional" nighttime lecture.

CC

(whispering to Evan)
Doc Hester is not well. We're
closing the Detox room and turning
away severe patients to lighten his
load.

EVAN

(whispering back)
I'm so sorry to hear that.

CC

He's been like a father to
Counselor Sharp and me.

EVAN

Anything I can do?

CC

Mr. Sharp plays chess with the
doctor. Keeps an eye on him. Doc
asked me if you could...

EVAN

(interrupting)
I'd be honored. When?

CC

Whenever he calls. Day or night.
(yells)

(MORE)

CC (CONT'D)

Take your seats. Mr. Doherty is about to begin. The story of Saint Michael.

The patients TURN their attention to Evan.

EVAN

I'm Evan Doherty, and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP

Hi, Evan.

A filthy patient, MR. GREENLY, enters the seminar late.

CC

Mr. Greenley. The convenience store reported that you bought a bottle of gin today. You are not welcome here at Saint Michael's. Continue Mr. Doherty.

Dimas and Gaston enter from nowhere and REMOVE the man.

EVAN

(shaken)

Michael the archangel has his roots in ancient Persia. Zoroastrianism.

CC

Move on to the Christian facts.

EVAN

(undaunted)

The Zoroasters had a ritual called Yasna, which offered immortality through intoxication.

CC

Mr. Doherty.

EVAN

The Book of Revelations says Michael led the fight against dragons. Imagine that? But long before that was written, the Zoroasters invented Michael, the archangels, and even Satan. The Jews and later Christians, and Islam, borrowed and adopted them.

CC

That's enough, Mr. Doherty. End with a prayer.

(MORE)

CC (CONT'D)

(beat)

Now.

EVAN

Great Archangel Michael, defend us
in battle, be our defense against
the wickedness and snares of the
devil.

GROUP

Amen.

Doc TRUDGES into the room, before CC can express
disappointment.

DOC

CC, I'd like to borrow Mr. Doherty
for chess.

CC

Why, sure Doc. Mr. Sharp should be
back soon if you'd care to wait.

DOC

Mr. Doherty will do fine.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Evan SEES that Doc is rapidly deteriorating. The chess set is
in mid-game.

DOC

In case CC comes in.

EVAN

So, we're not really playing.

DOC

What else did you learn today?

EVAN

Religions have borrowed from each
other since the dawn of time.

DOC

About the percentages of Americans
who believe in things.

Evan takes wrinkled notes from his pocket and reads.

EVAN

About fifty-five percent believe in spiritual healing, forty-two percent believe people can be possessed by the devil.

Doc SMIRKS and shakes his head in disbelief.

EVAN (CONT'D)

About forty-one percent believe in ESP, thirty-two percent believe in ghosts, and twenty-one percent in telepathy.

Doc LAUGHS loudly.

EVAN (CONT'D)

About twenty-six percent believe in clairvoyance, twenty-one percent believe in witches, and twenty-one percent believe that Earth has been visited by extraterrestrials.

Doc ROARS with LAUGHTER. Evan ENJOYS his report.

EVAN (CONT'D)

And twenty-one percent believe we can communicate with the dead, and one out of five people believe in reincarnation.

Doc TURNS serious.

DOC

What else? About me?

EVAN

CC says you're ill. She said...

There is a familiar, strong KNOCK on the door.

DOC

Come in, CC.

CC enters and INSPECTS the chess game.

CC

Can I get you anything before I head home, Doc?

DOC

Fine move, Mr. Doherty, you're a master.

(to CC)

(MORE)

DOC (CONT'D)

We're fine. I'll get us some tea.
Looks like I'm in for a long game.

CC

Not too late Doc. You need your
rest.

DOC

Without a mental challenge, what
fun is life, Doherty?

CC leaves in a HUFF.

DOC (CONT'D)

She'll be gone for the night. Let's
get to work.

EVAN

Work?

DOC

I need you to analyze my data. No
time to waste, before I...

EVAN

(interrupted)

I get it, Doc. How can I help?

DOC

Don't pity me. We all have
unfinished business.

EVAN

I've got to get back to my family.

DOC

I need your help with data set up,
statistics, and better critical
thinking than you showed tonight at
your lecture.

EVAN

What do you mean?

DOC

You read facts like an
encyclopedia. What did you feel?
What do you believe?

EVAN

I teach the scientific method. I
don't really believe in...

Doc PULLS many notebooks out of his safe and OPENS them.

DOC
Angels? Devils? The Easter Bunny?

EVAN
You have years of great data here.
Family history, vital signs, blood
work.

DOC
Almost forty year's worth. But what
people believe in...

EVAN
(interrupts)
Throws a wrench in the whole thing.

DOC
Right. Faith? Is it a wild card? A
placebo? A motivation? A divine
directive?

EVAN
A requirement? A prerequisite?

DOC
Exactly. We don't know.

EVAN
I'll tell you what I know. It's
getting hard to teach science to a
classroom of kids who believe in
Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and
Creationism.

DOC
It's what their parents and priests
taught them since they were born.

EVAN
My wife wants to believe, and I
can't confront her. I might lose
Martie.

Doc's hands are SHAKING uncontrollably. Evan SOBS.

EVAN (CONT'D)
I either have to live as an
alcoholic or devout Catholic. I
can't help you, Doc.

DOC
Then we'll never know how much of
this disease is genetic, in the
head, or environmental.

EVAN

Doc, I'm not your guy. I just want to get home. I have to turn Catholic, and...

DOC

(interrupting)

I'm dying, Evan. Someone like you doesn't come here often. I need your help.

Evan CONSIDERS his alternatives. Doc TEARS UP.

EVAN

Okay, Doc. I'll help you. Let's start with your hypotheses.

Doc RECOVERS miraculously. He is RENEWED.

DOC

One: initial levels of the dehydrogenase enzyme determine alcohol poisoning limits.

Evan SCRIBBLES in the notebook.

DOC (CONT'D)

Two: genetics determine the levels of important enzymes in the blood.
(beat)

This work has to be our secret.

EVAN

I understand. CC.

Evan and Doc WORK late into the evening.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Evan DRAGS himself into Chapel after several late nights helping Doc. He STRIVES to look like the perfect Catholic.

After mass, Father Francis CONFRONTS Evan.

FATHER FRANCIS

How's Doc doing? I hear you've taken the place of Mr. Sharp as a chess player.

EVAN

Doc's doing better. He's a hell, I mean, heck of a chess player.

FATHER FRANCIS

He must beat you the same way every night. The pieces are about the same every morning when I get my meds from him.

EVAN

I fall into the same traps or he's just that good, I guess, Father.

Evan looks WORRIED.

FATHER FRANCIS

Something bothering you, my son?

EVAN

Forgiveness, Father. When I call my wife, I apologize like crazy.

FATHER FRANCIS

And she's reluctant to forgive you.

EVAN

Exactly.

FATHER FRANCIS

You hurt them very deeply. You abandoned them for the bottle.

EVAN

That's what I apologize for.

FATHER FRANCIS

In God's time, Mr. Doherty.

EVAN

Did the Lord's Prayer say, 'Forgive us our trespasses in due time?'

FATHER FRANCIS

So you're a celestial lawyer now?

EVAN

That's an oxymoron, right?

FATHER FRANCIS

I get it, no lawyers in heaven, very funny.

EVAN

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged. Condemn not and...

FATHER FRANCIS

(interrupting)

I get it, my son. She's not forgiving you. Nobody's perfect. But, did you forgive yourself so easily?

The question CATCHES Evan off-guard.

EVAN

I, I need to acknowledge my own forgiveness to my wife and child.

FATHER FRANCIS

You're learning, my son. Maybe I could call Mary and invite her out next Sunday after mass. Let's pray together.

Evan PRAYED like never before.

Ponch BARGES into the chapel like a MANIAC.

PONCH

Evan, Dr. Sanchez wants to see you.

EVAN

Hi, Ponch. What about?

PONCH

I don't know. Ms. Sands is with her now.

(beat)

Talking about you, I bet.

INT. DR. SANCHEZ'S OFFICE - DAY

Nicole SWAYS from the office as Evan arrives. Her red eyes SMILE longingly at Evan. Dr. Sanchez SEES it all.

MARIE

Evan, come in. Shut the door.

Evan enters, SHUTS the door, and looks BEWILDERED.

EVAN

I'm a little torn. I need to talk.

MARIE

I need to talk with you too. Go.

EVAN

Without my daughter and wife, I'm lost.

MARIE

Interesting order.

EVAN

You know what I mean. Here, it's an emotional prison.

MARIE

Solitary confinement. And you're angry? Depressed?

EVAN

More sad, lonely, conflicted.

MARIE

Suicidal?

EVAN

I'm not crazy, self-destructive, or extremely selfish, so, hell no.

MARIE

Stomach aches? Headaches?

EVAN

Both. But it's my heart. It sinks when I call my wife, she won't let me talk to my daughter.

MARIE

But you're not suicidal?

EVAN

No, suicide is not a victimless crime. It leaves a wake of sadness and endless questions for loved ones left behind.

MARIE

A lot like your alcoholism left your loved ones?

Evan sadly REALIZES Marie's very important point.

EVAN

I got it. Alcoholism is not a victimless act either.

MARIE

You teeter between logic and depression. Any optimism in you?

EVAN

When I drink.

Marie STANDS UP angrily.

MARIE

Don't mess with me, Evan. That kind of optimism is false, chemically derived, and short-lived.

EVAN

I'm sorry.

MARIE

Why blame your wife for your lack of confidence and optimism?

EVAN

I shouldn't.

MARIE

Damn right, you shouldn't.

Evan BURIES his face in his hands.

EVAN

You're very smart, Marie. Thanks so much.

MARIE

Your wife ignoring you isn't your only problem.

EVAN

I know, alcoholism.

MARIE

Nicole Sands. She sees you as her knight in shining armor, Sir Lancelot.

EVAN

More like Sir Drink-a-lot.

MARIE

I advise you to stay in the crowd until she gets her head together.

EVAN

Thanks for the advice.

Marie MOTIONS that their session is over. Evan slowly, reluctantly, begins to leave the office.

MARIE

Where are your wife and daughter getting counseling?

Evan turns, CONCERNED.

EVAN

Saint Theresa's. Why?

MARIE

That's where Mr. Sharp is doing his volunteer work.

Evan STORMS OUT angrily, as rain pours outside.

INT. CC'S OFFICE - DAY

Dimas and Gaston STAND GUARD outside CC's office. They are shaking their heads 'no' as Evan STOMPS up to the door.

MR. DIMAS

(whispers)

I wouldn't go in there.

CC (O.S.)

I heard that. Who's there?

MR. GASTON

It's Mr. Doherty.

CC (O.S.)

Just a minute.

A few nervous minutes pass. The door INCHES open.

CC (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Come in, Mr. Doherty.

Evan enters to see a RAGGED-LOOKING CC, with red eyes and a dark future.

EVAN

We need to talk.

CC

I'm not a counselor.

EVAN

I've just come from an interesting meeting with Dr. Sanchez.

CC
 Maybe you need to see Father
 Francis.

EVAN
 I saw Father earlier. I want to
 talk to you
 (beat)
 Off the record.

CC
 That's against policy.

EVAN
 (demanding)
 Off the record.

CC
 Very well.

Seeing Evan's fervor, CC SHUTS OFF a recording device.

EVAN
 What can you tell me about Mr.
 Sharp?

CC turns a small picture frame FACE DOWN.

CC
 Derek Sharp is a fine man. He has a
 Master's degree in Community
 Service.

EVAN
 In Community Servicing? He's...

CC
 (interrupting)
 Expanding our client base.

EVAN
 Have there been any complaints of
 sexual harassment against him?

CC
 (yells)
 Mr. Dimas, Mr. Gaston? Mr. Doherty
 was just leaving.

EVAN
 He's spending all his time at Saint
 Theresa's, isn't he?

CC BUSIES herself in work. Dimas and Gaston FORCE Evan out.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Maybe he's the reason my wife is
too busy to answer her phone.

Ponch is PACING outside to race the FUMING Evan to Group.

PONCH

If you're late to Group, they make
you wear a big fake clock around
your neck in shame.

Evan CHECKS the Group assignments on the lobby wall. He SEES
Nicole's name is his assigned group.

EVAN

Not today, Ponch. Cover for me. I'm
going to the library.

PONCH

But you don't have...

It's too late. Evan SNEAKS out a side door.

EXT./INT. WALKING TO THE LIBRARY AND INSIDE - DAY

The RAIN provides the perfect cover for his escape. He
REMEMBERS the smell of rain and orange blossoms as a child.
He REFLECTS on Flannigan's Pub, SNEAKING drinks, and on
HAPPIER TIMES with Mary and Martie. He THINKS of Ponch, Doc,
and Dr. Sanchez.

EVAN

(mumbling)

I've got to call Mary.

Evan RACES into the library and to the pay phone. The
Librarian recognizes Evan and SMILES. He DIALS and waits as
the phone RINGS. No answer. Evan REMAINS optimistic. He SITS
with two old men reading newspapers.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Wednesday, February 28th, 2001.

OLD MAN

Shhh! Library.

EVAN

Mardi Gras Melee in Philly.

LIBRARIAN

(smiling)

Shhh!

EVAN

Sorry.

(laughs)

Holy Land theme park opens in Orlando? How gullible are we humans?

LIBRARIAN

Shhh! Next time I'll have to ask you to leave.

Evan BUSIES himself on a computer. A few minutes pass, when he is TAPPED on the shoulder from behind, by Nicole Sands.

NICOLE

Surprise!

Evan, SHOCKED, turns and sees Nicole in a hot pink mohair sweater and tight blue jeans, beautiful makeup, and a smile.

EVAN

Nicole?

LIBRARIAN

Sir. You have to go. I'll call...

Nichole GRABS his arm and PULLS Evan out of the library.

Once outside, Evan STOPS suddenly and FROWNS. Nicole POUTS.

NICOLE

Are you upset with me?

EVAN

I needed library time
(beat)
It's my only joy.

NICOLE

It doesn't have to be.

EVAN

We can't be seen like this. I'll be sent packing.

NICOLE

CC is the wicked bitch of the west.

EVAN

It's hard running Saint Michael's.

NICOLE

Are you on her side now?

EVAN

I'm on my side. I want to get well
to see my wife and daughter.

NICOLE

Hey, I want to get well too.

EVAN

I need to get well
(beat)
Alone.

NICOLE

So you spend every waking moment
with Father Francis, Marie, and all
night with Doc Hester?

Evan SHRUGS and begins WALKING toward Saint Michael's. Nicole
STOMPS her feet and SOBS.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'm the reason you ditched Group.

Evan LOOKS BACK at Nicole. She is SHAKING worse than Doc
Hester.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'm a little suicidal.

Evan RACES and HUGS her strongly.

EVAN

Never say that. Life is too
precious.

NICOLE

It's not precious to me. No one
really loves me.

Evan HUGS her more.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'm HIV positive.

Evan's arms INSTINCTIVELY RELAX. She HUGS him harder.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Can we go find some real coffee?

EVAN

Real coffee?
(beat)
How?

NICOLE

My car, silly. Daddy brought it out for me when I threatened suicide.

Nicole POINTS to a sporty BMW coup. Evan is apprehensive, but he gets in the car.

EVAN

Why am I doing this? I only have a few quarters for phone calls home.

NICOLE

Check the glove compartment.

Evan OPENS it and finds dozens of twenty-dollar BILLS.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Evan and Nicole GORGE on thick deli sandwiches, fresh coffee, and cookies.

EVAN

Magic Johnson tested positive. He's still doing well ten years later.

NICOLE

When you're famous, they stick by you. When you're not...

EVAN

(interrupting)
It's no reason to, ya know.

NICOLE

It would be different if someone really watched over me, like God.

EVAN

I care. CC watches you.

NICOLE

Not like she watches you. She practically titty-fucks you in the hallways.

Patrons HEAR Nicole. Evan is EMBARRASSED, he LEAVES, hiding his face. Neither of them SEES Mr. Gaston in a corner booth, but he SEES them leave. Nicole RACES after Evan with her car. The rain STOPS, and the car's top is down.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Evan. Come in. You won't make it back to dinner without me.

EVAN
Just get me back, please.

Nicole RACES back to St. Michael's.

EXT./INT. ST. MICHAEL'S - DAY

She PARKS a block away, and HIDES the car keys beneath the seat.

EVAN
That's pretty trusting.

NICOLE
Use the car and the money any time.
I won't need them.

They SNEAK into a back door to the lobby at St. Michael's.

EVAN
Stay positive, Nicole. Avoid
negativism in all its forms.

CC GREETs them in the center of the lobby.

CC
I didn't authorize a couple's
vacation. You both earned KP.

NICOLE
Can I wash the sharp knives?

EVAN
She's a little unstable, I...

CC
(interrupting)
Not unstable. Insubordinate.

EVAN
(whispering)
But she told me...

CC
(interrupting)
I'm not interested in what she told
you in your secret coffee shop hide-
a-way. Your wife won't like this a
bit.

CC STORMS back to her office, still YELLING. Nicole STORMS
off to the cafeteria.

CC (CONT'D)

KP in the morning as well, Mr.
Doherty. And lunch.

Ponch HEARS the yelling and approaches Evan.

EVAN

We have to watch Nicole. She's
suicidal. Don't let her near the
knives at KP.

PONCH

How will I get KP?

EVAN

Go call CC, 'ma'am'.

Evan RACES to the phone to call his wife before CC does.

BEGIN PHONE CONVERSATION

EVAN

Mary, it's really you.

MARY (O.S.)

How's rehab? You sound good.

EVAN

Sober ten days. I miss you and love
you so much. Guess who else checked
in here? Nicole Sands, an ex-
student. Young. Poor thing.

MARY (O.S.)

The congressman's perky daughter? I
know. CC called.

EVAN

Mary, please listen. Nothing will
interfere with my rehab.

MARY (O.S.)

If you screw this up, you'll return
to an empty house. Is that clear?

EVAN

If you could come out Sunday,
visitor's day, Father Francis...

MARY (O.S.)

(interrupting)

I'm not sure. My counselor says it
takes time to overcome Satan.

EVAN

Mine says it takes a family's love.
Who's your counselor?

MARY (O.S.)

Derek Sharp. Martie's coming home
from piano. I've got to go.

Mary HANGS UP.

END PHONE CONVERSATION

Evan is CRUSHED as he TRUDGES to KP. Ponch keeps a close EYE
on Nicole during KP.

After lights-out, Evan SNEAKS over to Doc Hester's office.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Doc is POURING OVER notes when Evan drags himself in.

DOC

You're late. It's insubordination.

EVAN

Twice I stand accused.

DOC

I don't have much time. Let's get
to work.

Evan RECOUNTS the day as he ORGANIZES data. Evan SMIRKS at
recollecting the Holy Land theme park.

EVAN

A Holy Land theme park. New
resurrection every day.

DOC

(angrily)

You've told what you don't believe
in, never what you do believe in.
Dr. Sanchez is worried too.

EVAN

She says I'm like a top, spinning
wildly, about to wobble and crash.

DOC

We all have times of instability.
 (looking at the chess
 table)
 What's your next move?

EVAN

Mary insists I convert, rejoin the
 Church. I guess I will. I won't
 lose my daughter.

Doc does not respond.

EVAN (CONT'D)

You have more of a problem with
 religion than I do.

DOC

I have a problem with credulity and
 personal dishonesty. Good night.

EVAN

(mumbling while leaving)
 Credulity? Believing in things
 without proof? Dishonesty? Damn
 it.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Evan AVOIDS everyone but Father Francis for several days
 leading to visitor's day on Sunday. Father Francis joins
 Evan in the back pew.

EVAN

But how can an all-loving God send
 babies to hell for original sin, a
 crime they didn't commit?

FATHER FRANCIS

Limbo. It's God's will.

EVAN

But you said anywhere outside the
 grace of God is hell. Did you know
 monks invented purgatory three
 centuries after Christ died?

FATHER FRANCIS

Leave things to historians, my son.
 I have news. Mary is coming today.

EVAN

Wonderful. I've got to tell Doc.

EXT./INT. DOC'S OFFICE - DAY

Evan RACES over to Doc's to find him IN BED, SICK.

EVAN
Doc? You okay?

DOC
Tired. I heard the news. Good.

EVAN
Yes, Mary's coming out. I become a
third-weeker. My life is back.

DOC
It's okay to act converted to get
your life back. I'm happy for you.

EVAN
They are the most important...

CC, Dimas, and Gaston BARGE in.

CC
Time for those tests at the
hospital. Sorry, Mr. Doherty.

Evan is GUIDED out, and Doc is ASSISTED to a car.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Evan SITS OPTIMISTICALLY on a bench, but visitor's day is
DAMPENED when only half the patients receive guests. Nicole
LOOKS DOWN sadly from her dorm room window as Mary ARRIVES.

Evan's kiss is more enthusiastic than hers.

EVAN
This means so much to me. You can't
imagine...

MARY
(interrupting)
I can't stay long. I left Martie
alone. It's too soon for her, our
counselor says.

EVAN
I'm a third-weeker now, on a
lifetime road to recovery. I'm
sorry...

MARY
 (interrupting)
 Father Francis says you are slowly
 embracing the Church again. Good.

EVAN
 Defense against Satan. You bet.

Dr. Sanchez HEARS Evan and joins them. Evan introduces them.

MARIE
 Mr. Doherty, why don't you bring us
 some coffee.

Evan HESITATES, but does as he is told.

MARIE (CONT'D)
 He's progressing well. Smart man. I
 think he'll beat it.

MARY
 Our counselor says...

MARIE
 Mr. Sharp, I know. Between you and
 me, if he's seeing you more than
 twice a week, keep an eye on that
 daughter of yours.

Mary looks STUNNED as Evan ARRIVES with coffee. Father
 Francis JOINS them as Marie leaves.

FATHER FRANCIS
 Mary, good of you to come.

MARY
 (weakly)
 With God's help, we'll get by. Oh,
 Father, has Evan confessed yet?

FATHER FRANCIS
 Not yet, but he's coming around.

Father Francis walks over to another patient as Mary TURNS
 ANGRY with Evan. Ponch walks by, but Evan DOESN'T SEE him.

MARY
 You told me you were converting.

EVAN
 I have two weeks left.

MARY
 I've got to go.

She TURNS and slowly walks away.

EVAN
(mumbles)
Tell Martie that I love her.

Nicole LOOKS DOWN like a ghost from her room. Evan SITS ALONE on a bench. Ponch JOINS him several minutes later.

EVAN (CONT'D)
It hit me. She might not have the desire or strength to take me back.

PONCH
Least you get to see them.

EVAN
Maybe visiting days.

PONCH
I'll still be your buddy.

EVAN
Thanks, Ponch. It's purgatory.

Ponch LOOKS AROUND at many more miserable patients.

PONCH
We're lucky to have purgatory, when so many others have hell.

Evan quickly TURNS AND LOOKS UP at Nicole's room.

EVAN
Oh my God. Nicole.

They RUN to her room. Something is BLOCKING the door.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Nicole! Nicole! Call Mr. Gaston.

Mr. Gaston and Dr. Sanchez RACE UP. They PUSH OPEN the door to find Nicole barely breathing, naked on the cold floor.

Evan COVERS her with a blanket.

MARIE
Get me Ipecac. Get her to puke.
(to Nicole)
Do you know where you are, Nicole?

NICOLE
(very weak)
I have no one. I'm in hell.

PONCH

I told you so.

Dr. Sanchez FINDS a half-empty vile and syringe.

EVAN

Let's get her to Detox.

MARIE

Evan, stay with her. Get her to eat. Drink lots of water. Walk her constantly, and get her out of there before CC and Doc get back in the morning. Mr. Gaston?

MR. GASTON

I know. It's our secret.

INT. DETOX ROOM - NIGHT

Evan WALKS a LIMP Nicole for hours. Nicole is dressed in her favorite hot pink sweater and tight blue jeans.

EVAN

More water. No sleeping. Keep walking. I'll get more food from Doc's refrigerator.

When Evan RETURNS with a sandwich, Nicole is DROWSY on the bed with her pants and sweater off. Rosary beads HANG around her neck.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Come on. Get dressed. Walk!

NICOLE

Do you like my rosary beads?

EVAN

Stop it, Nicole.

NICOLE

God didn't listen today. He didn't protect me from Satan.

Evan TRIES to dress her, but she RESISTS.

EVAN

You didn't protect you from you!
Where did you get the drugs?

NICOLE
 From my trunk, silly. Everybody
 here is fucked up. I belong here.

Nicole COLLAPSES in tears in the fetal position. Evan HUGS her, just enough to comfort her, but it FEELS GOOD.

EVAN
 We have the power to change. We'll
 get through this. We will.

INT./EXT. DETOX ROOM - DAY

SUPER: "Detox, 6 A.M., Monday morning"

Evan RACES into Detox from Doc's room to wake Nicole.

EVAN
 Let's go. Chapel.

NICOLE
 I need to pray for you. You're a
 non-believer. I know. I know.

EVAN
 Remember anything? Last night?

NICOLE
 Sleepwalking. Dreaming. Why?

EVAN
 Never mind. You go to chapel.
 I've got an errand to run. Worry
 about yourself today.

Nicole suddenly STOPS walking.

NICOLE
 Satan's influence. Drugs.

Evan RACES out to Nicole's car. He REMOVES the cash, the keys, a small bag of vials, and a pistol from the trunk. He HIDES everything in his pants. A police car ROLLS BY and rolls down the window. The POLICEMAN (45) looks serious.

POLICEMAN
 Can I see some ID?

EVAN
 I'm a patient at Saint Michael's
 rehab center...

POLICEMAN
 (interrupting)
 A neighbor described you perfectly.
 CC still running the place?

EVAN
 Like a prison.

POLICEMAN
 Hop in. I'm Peterson the Pagan.

Evan nervously HOPS IN, still HIDING the drugs and money.

EVAN
 Sober how long?

POLICEMAN
 Five years, three months. Tell
 Father Francis to kiss my ass.

EVAN
 I will. Thanks, Officer.

CC MEETS Evan on the way to Doc's office.

CC
 Mr. Gaston tells me Ms. Sands
 bumped her head, and you helped her
 by keeping her awake.

EVAN
 The Christian thing to do. How's
 Doc doing?

CC
 He wouldn't say. He'll tell Mr.
 Sharp, who is visiting today. Doc
 wants to see you, now.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE - DAY

Evan finds Doc SNOOPING around like a detective.

DOC
 How is Ms. Sands doing?

EVAN
 Fine, but how are you?

DOC
 Dying. Like all of us.

EVAN

Nicole is a heroin addict. Can you dispose of this?

DOC

Later as medical waste. Use my safe for now.

EVAN

Great. I met Peterson the Pagan. Still sober. Five years.

DOC

So, non-religious people can do it. I know. I need more information from the library. Acupuncture. Come back after dinner for a chess game.

INT. CC'S OFFICE - DAY

Dimas and Gaston STAND guard as Evan ARRIVES hurriedly.

MR. DIMAS

Ms. Sands is in there, sticking up for you.

EVAN

I need to hit the library for Doc.

MR. GASTON

(whispers)
We won't tell. Go.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

The librarian watches Evan like a hawk as he calls home.

BEGIN PHONE CONVERSATION

MARY (O.S.)

Hello.

EVAN

Mary, it's me. I'm worried about Martie, and that gives me strength.

MARY (O.S.)

Martie?

EVAN

Kids with two parents in A.A. have a fifty percent chance of ending there too.

MARY (O.S.)

I had no idea.

EVAN

Strong genetic component.

LIBRARIAN

Shhhh!

EVAN

Sorry. I know I can help myself and our family.

The librarian gently quiets Evan. Minutes later, he HANGS UP. Evan CHECKS OUT a book on acupuncture for Doc.

LIBRARIAN

What's next? A book on homeopathy?

EVAN

(whispering)
Do you drink?

LIBRARIAN

Maybe one glass of wine a night. Sometimes two on a wild Saturday night. I never have more than two drinks per night or five drinks per week. I won't allow it.

EVAN

(smiling)
Lucky you. An off switch.

The librarian SMILES. Evan RACES back to St. Michael's.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Nicole CONFESSES in the chapel with Father Francis.

NICOLE

Do you really believe Satan comes from hell to tempt the weak.

FATHER FRANCIS

And the strong, my child.

NICOLE

I want the temptations to stop. I want to go to heaven.

FATHER FRANCIS

We all want...

NICOLE

(interrupting)

Father, you don't understand. I want to go now.

She SOBS openly. Father Francis GUIDES her from the confessional. Dapper DEREK SHARP, 35, is waiting. He EYES Nicole like a bloodhound in heat.

MR. SHARP

Just passing through, Padre. I'm on my way to see Doc.

FATHER FRANCIS

Same old Mr. Sharp, I see.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE - DAY

Doc CLOSES all his notebooks as Derek Sharp ENTERS.

MR. SHARP

I'm worried sick about you, Doc. What did the doctors say?

DOC

Not to start any long novels or buy green bananas.

MR. SHARP

Anything I can do to help get your affairs in order?

DOC

You mean, my will?

MR. SHARP

We're like family, Doc. CC and I know how much Saint Michael's could use your support.

DOC

I know! The scandals, priests raping altar boys, legal settlements.

MR. SHARP

The Holy Father is putting the squeeze on us. What will I tell CC?

DOC

Tell her the Lord may provide.
(beat)
I may not.

INT. CC'S OFFICE - DAY

CC PULLS Derek into her office, and MOTIONS for Mr. Dimas and Mr. Gaston to take a hike. The PASSIONATE GROANS in the office mean one thing.

SUPER: "Five minutes later"

CC ADJUSTS her skirt, while Derek ZIPS his pants.

CC

How was Doc?

MR. SHARP

Shaking a lot. He looks bad.

CC

What about his will? Patient fees can't keep this place going.

MR. SHARP

Doc didn't commit. I'm growing tired of fund raising out there.

CC

And Mary Doherty?

MR. SHARP

If Father Francis can convert Evan, she'll donate like crazy.

CC

And Congressman Sands?

MR. SHARP

If we clean up his daughter, he'll write the check of a lifetime.

CC

Keeping her alive will be tough. I could make Mr. Doherty her buddy.

Dimas and Gaston RETURN and KNOCK on CC's door.

MR. DIMAS

We saw Doherty in the lobby.
He'll be here any minute.

Mr. Sharp FLIES out of the office.

CC (O.S.)

Send him in when he gets here.

Two minutes later, Evan ARRIVES with the BOOK on acupuncture under his arm.

MR. DIMAS

Go right in.

Evan enters to SEE a sweaty CC trying to look composed.

CC

What do you have there, Mr.
Doherty?

EVAN

It's a book on acupuncture.

CC

You don't need eastern mysticism to
battle alcohol, you need our Lord.

EVAN

It's for Doc. It's an emergency.

CC

I hope he's okay. Oh, Mr. Flores is
leaving next week, so I'm assigning
you a new buddy. Ms. Sands.
Please notify her in Group.

Evan can't believe his ears. He STORMS away.

INT. GROUP THERAPY - DAY

Nicole SAVES an empty seat next to her. Evan looks WORRIED.

EVAN

(whispering)
CC told me I was your new buddy.

NICOLE

I prayed for this to happen.

JUSTIN, (28), an athlete, STANDS.

JUSTIN
I'm Justin, and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP
Hi, Justin.

JUSTIN
Twelve steps lead me back to the ballpark.

GROUP
Amen.

JUSTIN
Two days to go. Praise be to Almighty God.

MR. RANDALL
You've got every day of your life to go, not just two days.

Group therapy CONTINUES for an hour, with Nicole SMILING at Evan the whole time. Ponch WAITS for Evan at the end.

PONCH
It's okay that Nicole is your buddy. We'll be A.A. buddies forever.

EVAN
Forever? Right, Ponch. Forever.

Evan HUGS Ponch and RACES to the phones. He DIALS.

BEGIN PHONE CONVERSATION

MARTIE (O.S.)
Hello.

EVAN
Martie? Martie? It's been so long.

MARTIE (O.S.)
Daddy, are you crying?

EVAN
I'm so happy.

MARTIE (O.S.)
Mom's taking us to see creepy Mr. Sharp.

EVAN
Tell your mother how you feel.

MARTIE (O.S.)

She's too religious and too preachy
for me. I can't wait until you get
home. I love you so much.

EVAN

I needed so badly to hear that from
you. The next two weeks will fly
by. I love you.

Evan HEARS Mary in the background CALLING Martie. Martie
quickly HANGS UP.

END PHONE CONVERSATION

Nicole, happy as could be, makes a call next to Evan.

NICOLE

Mom? It's Nicole. Three weeks to
go. I have phone privileges now.

(beats)

We do prayer, Group therapy with my
buddy, and more prayer.

(beats)

Tell Daddy I love him. Love you
too. Bye.

She HANGS UP the phone with an ANGELIC look.

EVAN

Wow. It's turning around for you.
That's great news.

NICOLE

And there's free legal advice
tonight in the cafeteria. Let's go.

Two happy patients SCAMPER OFF to the cafeteria.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Four dapper Attorneys (mixed ages and genders) PROVIDE free
advice at four tables for two hours. CC WANDERS IN SMILING to
end the session.

CC

One more question, then we'll thank
our volunteer attorneys.

ATTORNEY #1

Our pleasure. Remember, you have
rights, but so do your wives,
husbands, and employers.

EVAN

Are you sure the Teacher's Union
will back me?

ATTORNEY #1

I'm sure. You get thirty days sick
leave. If not, give me a call.

At another table, Ponch looks WORRIED.

PONCH

I only missed two payments.

ATTORNEY #2

Send them a hundred dollars as a
good-faith gesture. You'll be
fine.

Ponch LOWERS his chin.

NICOLE

Mr. Flores, I have a hundred
dollars for you. Right, Evan?

PONCH

I couldn't possibly...

NICOLE

(interrupting)
We're all buddies, Ponch.

EVAN

I moved the money, I'll get it.

Nicole is DEFENSIVE. She whispers strongly to Evan.

NICOLE

There are some things in the car
I'm not proud of.

EVAN

I disposed of them for your safety.

NICOLE

(meanly)
But Satan desires them at times.

PONCH

Thank you, Nicole, for the money.
I'm going to the chapel to pray.
Come with me.

NICOLE

You two go ahead. I've got one more question for the lawyers.

Evan and Ponch go to the Chapel. Nicole CORNERS a female attorney.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

How easy is it to write a will?

The attorney PROVIDES a simple TEMPLATE to follow.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Evan KNOCKS quickly and BURSTS through the door. He is MUMBLING.

EVAN

I hope Doc's okay.

DOC

Don't worry. I'm fine.

EVAN

Was I mumbling again?

DOC

I made tea. What did you learn about acupuncture?

EVAN

People spend millions on it. They claim it helps them for everything from headaches to arthritis.

DOC

And they use it on pets now.

EVAN

You knew? Why did you...

DOC

(interrupting)

Any real proof it works?

EVAN

That's the funny thing. No studies by the AMA or top medical schools. None. A few minor studies from China. Inconclusive.

Doc SMILES. He knew it all along.

DOC
How's Ms. Sands?

EVAN
Amazingly well. Now, at least.

DOC
With the Lord's help?

EVAN
Whatever works, I guess.

DOC
What do you mean?

Doc is ANGRY. Evan looks CONFUSED.

EVAN
God works for her. What's the harm?

DOC
What's helping you?

Evan BUSIES HIMSELF analyzing Doc's data.

EVAN
I don't know. I just want to be
there for my daughter. I want my
wife and job back.

DOC
Now, we're getting somewhere.

EVAN
When I talk to you about logic,
empirical evidence, and reasoning,
I'm not thinking about booze.

DOC
Some turn to God. You turn to
science. Is that it?

EVAN
Like Pavlov's dog.

DOC
Ahh. Good. Nobel Prize in 1904.
Ring a bell when you feed a dog,
and he salivates when you ring the
bell. We use the term to describe
uncritical thinkers.

Doc starts to FALL. Evan LEAPS to catch him.

EVAN
Doc, are you okay?

DOC
Oxygen. In my room. Wheelchair.

Minutes later Doc is on OXYGEN, in a wheelchair, but still DISORIENTED.

DOC (CONT'D)
Thanks
(beat)
Everett.

Evan lets the MISTAKE slide.

EVAN
Doc, I need to get into your safe to get some things I left there.

DOC
Huh. I locked it for once.

EVAN
What's the combination, Doc?

DOC
I don't remember. Twenty-nine, six, something.

EVAN
Maybe you should write it down.

DOC
My hand shakes. Can't write.

EVAN
Remember CC? Peterson the Pagan? Acupuncture? Is that oxygen working yet? Who am I?

DOC
Eddy? Evan! Seventeen. That's it. Twenty-nine, six, seventeen.

EVAN
Thank God.

DOC
Acupuncture, witchcraft, touch therapy, faith-healing. It's all nonsense, a fool's paradise. Why do we believe? Why?

EVAN
Why do we believe the things we do?

DOC
Yes. Why? You're so close.

EVAN
Is it in your data?

Doc SMILES behind the oxygen mask.

EVAN (CONT'D)
We could borrow Dr. Sanchez's new laptop computer and analyze it in no time.

DOC
But, why do we believe so long?

Evan WHEELS Doc into his room. He TAKES Nicole's money for Ponch. He WALKS slowly to his dorm room.

EVAN
(mumbling)
Why do people believe things for as long as they do? Dangerous question.

Over the next three days, Evan THINKS of little else.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Morning mass is not the same, as Evan mumbles loudly enough to annoy several people around him in the pews.

EVAN
Why a virgin birth? A body ascending to the heavens? Wine turned into blood? It's dogma. I have to believe, so I can confess my sins. Why is it so hard for me to accept things?

MR. RANDALL
Shhhh.

EVAN
Why did God create Satan, then create the Archangel Michael to battle him? Why not save a step and not create the devil?

PATIENT #2

Shhhh.

EVAN

Why will only five percent of us remain sober for twenty years?

PATIENTS #1 AND #2

Jesus, that's low!

FATHER FRANCIS

Do you have something to share, Mr. Doherty? We're in the middle of our twelve steps.

EVAN

We said Jesus our Lord. The higher power.

Evan REMAINS QUIET until breakfast.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

A small crowd GATHERS around Evan's table as he 'talks treason,' as the Irish say.

EVAN

Six of ten people who stay sober five years credit a higher power.

MR. RANDALL

See, Doherty, a higher power.

EVAN

But Peterson the Pagan made it, and the success rate of rehab is only five or six percent on average.

PATIENT #2

Those aren't good odds.

EVAN

The librarian figured it out. She never touches more than five drinks a week, never more than two drink in any one day.

MR. RANDALL

Moderation? It never works.

EVAN

Works for her. She has an off switch. It works for many people.

(MORE)

EVAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

It just doesn't work for us.

NICOLE

Evan, it's against God's will to ruin hope us with your horrible statistics. You should be ashamed.

Nicole STORMS away. The ceiling speaker interrupts them.

CC (O.S.)

Mr. Doherty, come see me. The rest of you, Bishop Skeen is discussing the Holy Spirit in the chapel.

EXT./INT. CC'S OFFICE - DAY

Dimas and Gaston stand guard, LAUGHING as Evan walks up.

MR. DIMAS

You did it again.

EVAN

(laughs)

I guess so.

CC (O.S.)

Come in, Mr. Doherty.

Evan enters to see a frightened CC pouring over the books. She is dressed in her Sunday best, covered neck and all.

EVAN

Sorry about the cafeteria talk.

CC

We have bigger issues. The Bishop wants to sell Saint Michael's to help pay for the church scandals. Dozens of priests are charged.

EVAN

I saw the newspapers at the library.

CC

We need big donations.

EVAN

This place offers hope and discipline where there is none. I see that. Others will.

CC

Saving some lives is better than
 saving no lives. Never take away
 another patient's hope. Got it?
 Now, go to Chapel.

EVAN

Yes, the Holy Spirit lecture.
 (mumbles)
 That should help.
 (beat)
 Like faith-healing.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Evan doesn't go to the chapel. He TAKES his first trip to the convenience store. The liquor aisle TEMPTS him like never before. He EYES the security cameras and the CLERK (40).

CLERK

Help you find something?

EVAN

Snacks. Just snacks.

CLERK

Water and soda are here in the
 front. Beer is in the back.

EVAN

(mumbling)
 Cameras are in the back too.

Two GRUELING minutes later, Evan is at the register with nachos, GRUMBLING as he pays. He CROSSES the street to a small park.

EXT. SMALL PARK - DAY

Evan is MUMBLING as he strolls in the park, EATING nachos.

EVAN

(mumbling)
 Non-alcoholic beer, the gateway
 drug. Or pot, a motivation-eraser.
 I need something. One won't hurt.

He TURNS and RACES back to the convenience store. WALT (62) and TODD (24), two other patients from Saint Michael's, were shopping.

Mutually EMBARRASSED in front of the beer fridge, they all buy chips and water, and RETURN to the park. Three Homeless Men (mixed ages) pass them, SCROUNGING for food scraps.

WALT

That's us in ten years, if we drink.

TODD

That's us in ten days, if we drink.

EVAN

Thanks for being there guys.

WALT

Thank God, not us. Hey, tonight's mac and cheese-wiz.

EVAN

I like mac and cheese-wiz night.

TODD

Wait until you're a fourth-weeker.

The three men LAUGH as they RETURN to St. Michael's. The courtyard is DESERTED.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Evan enters the lobby to see many patients with their heads down. Mr. Dimas runs to meet Evan.

EVAN

What's wrong?

MR. DIMAS

It's Nicole Sands.
(beat)
She shot herself.

Evan COLLAPSES to the floor.

EVAN

Oh my God. Oh my God.

MR. DIMAS

The police want to talk to you in CC's office.

Dimas HELPS Evan up and GUIDES him to CC's office. Dr. Sanchez waits outside.

INT. CC'S OFFICE - DAY

Two burly Police Officers (50) GRILL CC and Mr. Gaston.

OFFICER THOMSACK

I'm Detective Uhrlich. This is my partner, Detective Thomsack. You Doherty?

EVAN

Evan Doherty.

OFFICER THOMSACK

How long did you know Ms. Sands?

EVAN

Three years as a high school student, and here, for the past two weeks.

OFFICER UHRLICK

Where did she get the pistol?

EVAN

I don't know. Am I a suspect?

CC

No, we have you on tape at the convenience store and the librarian reported you there earlier. She remembers you very well.

OFFICER THOMSACK

What was Ms. Sands' mood the past few days?

EVAN

She was making real progress. Her mood was optimistic, religious, and a solid twelve-step believer.

OFFICER UHRLICK

Was she sneaking drugs or alcohol. We'll test her blood.

EVAN

I said she was improving.

OFFICER THOMSACK

She left a suicide note. It reflects poorly on Saint Michael's, but well on you and a Mr. Ponch Flores.

OFFICER UHRLICK
Were you more than friends?

EVAN
We were buddies, partners, helping
each other through rehab.

CC
Do you know if she left a will?

Dr. Sanchez KNOCKS loudly on the door, and BARGES in.

MARIE
I can answer that.

CC
Dr. Sanchez, we didn't...

OFFICER THOMSACK
(interrupt)
Please enlighten us, Doctor.

MARIE
Marie Sanchez, the counselor.

CC
Substitute counselor.

MARIE
She left a will. She got help on
free legal night. I was a witness,
so was Father Francis. Here it is.

CC
Did she mention Saint Michael's?

MARIE
She left you one dollar.

CC
Her father will contest it. It will
be tossed out. A druggie only two
weeks into rehab.

MARIE
We called her father together. He
was fine with it. He washed his
hands of her. He refused to
believe in an imaginary Satan as
the cause of her temptation.

OFFICER UHRLICK

That explains the suicide note. She blamed Satan for everything, including the pistol.

OFFICER THOMSACK

Having a priest and counselor as witnesses on the will.

(beat)

Brilliant.

CC begins READING the will.

CC

To Evan Doherty, I leave my sports car, and half of my remaining estate.

Evan is still STUNNED by the suicide.

CC (CONT'D)

The other half goes to Mr. Tito Flores.

EVAN

Ponch?

CC

It will never hold up. Saint Michael's. Poor Saint Michael's.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Evan MOURNS all the way to Doc's office. Doc is TREMBLING and IMPATIENT.

DOC

What took you?

EVAN

Father Francis went on about how suicide is a mortal sin, as bad as murder, abortion, and mercy killing. There is no forgiveness.

DOC

I was sorry to hear about the Sands girl. She was probably bipolar. I forgive her. I...I...

Doc begins to COLLAPSE.

EVAN
You need oxygen again.

Evan RACES to fetch the wheelchair and oxygen. Evan REPLACES the bottle, and gets Doc settled. Evan CALLS Dr. Sanchez.

BEGIN PHONE CONVERSATION

MARIE (O.S.)
Hello, Doc?

EVAN
It's Evan. I'm in Doc's office.

MARIE (O.S.)
Tell Doc I almost have all his data in. Grief counseling for Nicole has been tough on us all.

EVAN
We're set for tomorrow night. Remember, CC can't find out.

MARIE (O.S.)
No worries.

END PHONE CONVERSATION

The COLOR RETURNS to Doc's face.

EVAN
We're on for tomorrow night, Doc.

Doc REMOVES his oxygen mask.

DOC
Evan. Do you know the secret to sobriety?

EVAN
What, Doc?

DOC
Keep your loved ones in your head.

Evan SMILES and WRITES that note in his journal. Doc RETURNS the mask to his face.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Ponch WAITS on a bench for a ride as Evan JOINS him to say goodbye.

EVAN
I'll miss you, Ponch.

PONCH
(tearfully)
It's so nice of your wife and
daughter to give me a ride.

EVAN
Mary's coming around. Nicole's
lawyer will be in touch soon.

PONCH
I can't believe she saved my house
for me.

EVAN
You watched out for her, and she
watched out for you and me, in a
strange way.

PONCH
Here comes your chuisle mo chroi,
the pulse of your heart. You never
stopped talking about her.

Mary and Martie PULL UP, kiss, and hug Evan and Ponch.

EVAN
Thanks so much for coming out.

MARIE
I can't wait for you to come home,
Daddy.

MARY
We're sorry about your friend's
(beat)
accident.

PONCH
It was a suicide.

MARY
We won't be discussing it, Mr.
Flores. Evan, have you been to
confession yet?

EVAN
I'm on my way. Only one week left.
I'll be more Catholic than the
Pope.

Evan CRIES and SMILES simultaneously as they drive off.

EVAN (CONT'D)
 (mumbling)
 No time to lament. My last week.
 I've got to meet with Marie to
 analyze Doc's data.

Evan RACES to Dr. Sanchez's office.

INT. DR. SANCHEZ'S OFFICE - DAY

He KNOCKS then enters, SHOCKED to see a stranger, Derek Sharp.

EVAN
 I'm sorry. I had an appointment
 with Marie.

MR. SHARP
 I'm Mr. Sharp. Dr. Sanchez is no
 longer with us.

Evan COLLAPSES, like a man with no Plan B.

EVAN
 The same Mr. Sharp spending all the
 time with my wife and child under
 the guise of counseling?

MR. SHARP
 You're Evan Doherty. I admit to
 raising funds for Saint Michael's.

EVAN
 That's what you call it?

MR. SHARP
 You have yourself to worry about.
 Twenty-five percent of our patients
 don't make it the four weeks.

EVAN
 Less than six percent stay sober
 after, but hope springs eternal,
 especially here.

MR. SHARP
 Religious people have better odds.
 Have you been to confession yet?

EVAN
 Is this a bad time to ask if I can
 get out one day early this week?

MR. SHARP

Let's see. Oh, Saint Patrick's Day. Going to Flannigan's?

EVAN

How did you know?

Evan RECALLS the night -- it was Mr. Sharp WAVING the fifty-dollar bill at Flannigan's that fateful night, but he keeps his cool.

MR. SHARP

Nobody twisted your arm to drink. Also, CC and I think Doc is up to something with you. CC confiscated all his notebooks, and she's replacing Doc next week.

Evan THINKS of his daughter and CONTROLS his temper. He slowly exits.

EVAN

One week to go, Mr. Sharp.

Evan RACES to CC's office. Dimas and Gaston HEAR arguing inside and HALT Evan from entering.

CC (O.S.)

One strike and you're out. How was that convenience store beer? Inconvenient now, I guess.
(yells)
Get them out of here.

Dimas and Gaston PULL OUT Walt and Todd, the two men who Evan was with at the park a few days earlier. The drunks WEEP to no avail. Evan BARGES in.

CC (CONT'D)

I don't have time for you, Mr. Doherty. I'm settling Mr. Flores's big contribution to Saint Michael's.

EVAN

Ponch? You can't do that. He's...

CC

(interrupting)
Generous to a fault.

EVAN

Did you hijack Doc's notebooks?

CC

I have to protect the privacy of
our patients. Good day.

Evan STORMS out to the lobby.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Evan DIALS a number, reading from a SCRAP OF PAPER.

BEGIN PHONE CONVERSATION

EVAN

It's Evan. You were right. Tonight,
7 P.M., Doc's back window.

Evan hangs up.

END PHONE CONVERSATION

EXT./INT. CHAPEL TO DOC'S OFFICE - NIGHT

SUPER: "6:55 P.M."

Evan RACES from Chapel to Doc's office.

EVAN

Doc, are you ready for this?

DOC

Waiting my whole life.

There is light TAPPING on Doc's back window. Marie Sanchez
HANDS Evan her laptop and CRAWLS through the window.

MARIE

Hi, Doc. Hi, Evan. Let's get to
work.

Doc is FIGHTING his oxygen mask as they all HOVER over the
laptop, with Evan WORKING the statistics software. They
RECOGNIZE many names: Celestine Chapman, Derek Sharp, Dimas
and Gaston, and even Father Francis. They SIP TEA during the
all-night ordeal. Finally, the RESULTS are in.

EVAN

You were right, Doc. Alcohol blood
level is determined by the level of
dehydrogenase enzyme.

MARIE

In English please.

DOC

People have different biological capacities to process alcohol.

EVAN

They're born with more chemicals to neutralize the alcohol they drink.

DOC

The lucky ones. Women produce less of the enzyme.

MARIE

And get drunk easier.

EVAN

But high enzymes are a curse too, right Doc?

DOC

Looks like only ten percent of the alcohol can be captured. The rest hits the organs pretty hard.

EVAN

Hurting those with no off switch.

DOC

Look! Very few patients develop Korsakoff's disease.

MARIE

That disease sounds bad.

DOC

The brain disorder killing me. It's like Parkinson's plus Alzheimer's.

Marie and Evan comfort Doc, but he pushes them back.

DOC (CONT'D)

But there's good news. Patients with a loving family have more success.

EVAN

I see. Like Peterson the Pagan.

MARIE

Like you, Evan. But look at all the psychological factors on the negative side -- for drinking.

EVAN

Immediate gratification, false hope, and desire for power. So, a lot of it's psychological.

DOC

I'm afraid so, but after you account for biology and genetics, the twelve steps don't help much.

EVAN

Statistically, rehab is no better than the placebo effect.

(beat)

Temporary and not a real cure.

MARIE

There must be more effective rehab techniques.

DOC

They will have to include genetics, enzyme research, new medicines, and

(beat)

Personal responsibility.

MARIE

Finding our own off switches.

EVAN

Personal responsibility. Keeping your loved ones in your head.

Right, Doc?

Doc SMILES his biggest smile in years.

EVAN (CONT'D)

So, let's help Doc write his scientific paper.

Doc's hands are SHAKING too much to help.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

SUPER: March 16, 2001. Two days to go.

Evan is at the library. An Elderly man (70) sits and reads.

LIBRARIAN

(whispering)

You again. Looking for a book on magic herbs? Human sacrifice? Monsters?

EVAN

I'm avoiding monsters. Any books on the flat earth? Our fearless leader has a sign in her office...

LIBRARIAN

(interrupting)

Funny you should ask. The bible has several passages about the earth being flat: Isaiah eleven-twelve, and Revelation seven-one to name a few.

EVAN

How do you do that? You're amazing.

LIBRARIAN

(loudly)

And of course, all ancient Egyptians and Persians believed gods held up the four corners of the flat earth.

OLD MAN

Shhh!

EVAN

Let me guess, the Hebrews borrowed the idea from the Egyptians, and the Christians stole the idea from the Hebrews, but the gods turned into angels, right?

LIBRARIAN

Right, but Columbus and most educated people knew it was round. Some folks refused to believe the earth was round, because the Holy Bible said...

EVAN

(interrupting)

The earth was flat, and held up by four angels. End of story.

LIBRARIAN

(even louder)

But did you know that our town of Lancaster is the last bastion of the Flat Earth Society. Their leader lives up the road.

EVAN
What? Do bad ideas ever die?

OLD MAN
Shhhh!

LIBRARIAN
Ask Charles Johnson. I'll draw you
a map. Be careful. He's ornery.

EVAN
I've got to meet this dinosaur.
(to the old man while
leaving)
Shhh!

Evan HOPS in his inherited car and SPEEDS off.

EXT. CHARLES JOHNSON'S HOME - DAY

Evan ARRIVES at a trashy trailer CARRYING a bag of groceries.
An old wheelchair rests on the porch. A sign reads "KEEP
OUT" Evan KNOCKS weakly.

EVAN
Anybody home? I brought groceries.

CHARLES JOHNSON (O.S.)
Go Away.

EVAN
I'm a patient from Saint Michael's.
I just need a few minutes.

JOHNSON, 76, widower and curmudgeon, opens the door and grabs
the groceries.

CHARLES JOHNSON
Five minutes. I keep the food.

Evan enters a FILTHY trailer. Unimaginable SMELLS fill the
air.

EVAN
I'm Evan Doherty. I read that your
wife died. I'm sorry.

CHARLES JOHNSON
I miss her more every day. It
doesn't mean that you can convert
me with your grease-ball
brainwashing science. It's why
anybody comes here.

EVAN

I just need to understand. You still think the world is flat?

CHARLES JOHNSON

The bible says it. I believe in the bible. Earth is held by four angels at the corners.

EVAN

Angels? Like Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny?

CHARLES JOHNSON

Bible don't mention them.

EVAN

Satan? Archangels? Virgin birth, and the flat earth.

Johnson RUMMAGES through the grocery bag. He grows impatient.

CHARLES JOHNSON

The bible says so.

EVAN

All the sailors, satellites, and geographers are wrong? All of them?

CHARLES JOHNSON

I keep a carpenter's level handy to teach the truth. Go anywhere on earth and put it on the ground and it proves the earth is flat.

EVAN

That bubble is u-shaped. Know why?

Johnson examines the U-SHAPED BUBBLE.

CHARLES JOHNSON

I don't care why.

EVAN

Why do you suppose the bubble isn't flat on the bottom? Ever turn your carpenter's level upside down?

Johnson TURNS the level upside down and EXAMINES the bubble.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Gravity from the center of the spherical earth draws the center of the bubble down. Everywhere you go.

CHARLES JOHNSON

Get out of my house.

EVAN

You helped me more than you could ever know. People like you never ask 'why'. You quit looking for truth as a child.

CHARLES JOHNSON

Thanks for the food, crazy grease-baller. Consumed by doubt, is that what you want?

EVAN

As a matter of fact, I do. Wonder, curiosity, and doubt. Thanks for seeing me.

Evan SMILES and LEAVES. When he is a few feet from the door, Johnson THROWS the level right past his ear.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

SUPER: "Last day at rehab -- St. Patrick's Day, 2001"

Evan KNEELS in the first pew, TORMENTED, as Father Francis PREACHES the twelve steps.

EVAN

(mumbling)

All I need to do is confess my sins after mass, I'll graduate, and Mary will take me back.

Father Francis STRUGGLES to HEAR Evan, but he can't.

EVAN (CONT'D)

I can't accept the tenants of the Catholic faith, but who is to know?

FATHER FRANCIS

You'll need the higher power to battle the temptation on Saint Patrick's Day. Don't fool yourself.

EVAN

I'd be fooling myself, Father Francis, and Mary, but I'll tell Martie the truth.

FATHER FRANCIS

The truth is, you can't do it alone. He will punish you for drinking.

EVAN

Jesus drank wine, historical fact. Did God, His Father, punish him?

This time, Father Francis HEARS Evan, STOPS, and STARES. Evan REMAINS behind after Chapel.

FATHER FRANCIS

Can I finally hear your confession?

EVAN

Luke 7:47-48. Jesus told a woman that her many sins have been forgiven, for she loved much. I'll just love much and take my chances, Father.

FATHER FRANCIS

In this world, but what about the next?

EVAN

One day at a time, one life at a time, I suppose.

Evan SMILES as he WAVES good-bye to Father Francis.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

SUPER: "4 P.M. - Eight hours to go."

Evan SITS with his SUITCASE as he WATCHES TV in the lobby, Time DRAGS BY with Irish music and parades on TV. Evan DREAMS of Flannigan's pub.

Mr. Dimas and Mr. Gaston find Evan.

MR. DIMAS

CC set you up for the last appointment of the day.

MR. GASTON

Four-thirty to five P.M.

EVAN
I'm going to miss you guys.

MR. DIMAS
You weren't boring.

MR. GASTON
Never pathetic.

MR. DIMAS AND MR. GASTON
We liked that.

EVAN
I'm sure I'll pass the urine test.

They all LAUGH and HUG. The afternoon CREEPS by.

INT. CC'S OFFICE - DAY

Evan shows up right at 4:30. Dimas and Gaston SMILE.

EVAN
Wish me luck.

CC (O.S.)
I heard that. Come in Mr. Doherty.

CC is wearing a tight white sweater and tennis shorts. Evan extends a HANDSHAKE.

CC (CONT'D)
Thank us. We saved your life.

EVAN
Thank you. This place helped me personally, but...

CC
(interrupting)
But what?

EVAN
It's not helping many others.

CC
We could not prevent Ms. Sand's suicide. We're tough on patients for their own good.

EVAN
And you took shameful advantage of Ponch's inheritance.

CC

Dr. Sanchez's test results confirmed his severe learning disability, so I tore up his donation papers.

EVAN

Good for you. And Mr. Sharp is a pervert misogynist.

CC

With your wife, I admit, he was overzealous in fund raising...

EVAN

(interrupting)

But, why isn't your rehab center more successful?

CC

Alcohol is a dangerous demon.

EVAN

Stronger than an all-powerful God?

CC

You've been sober twenty-seven days, so you're an expert? How nice.

She OPENS a desk drawer and pulls out full liquor bottles that she confiscated. She unbuttons a top button of her sweater. Evan LOOKS, but doesn't bite.

EVAN

I have a new one-step program: The power is within me to stay sober for the ones I love. That's it.

CC

You didn't confess to Father Francis? Mary will never take you back. You need a higher power. You need...

EVAN

(interrupting)

You need to carefully examine the science of chemical addiction. You need to replace the failing twelve step program with one that works.

Evan GETS UP to leave. Mr. Dimas and Mr. Gaston LAUGH.

CC

We all need God's help, Mr.
Doherty!

EVAN

(yells)

Take care of Doc for me. He's the
brains of this outfit. He saved my
life. I'm going to thank him now.

CC

(smiling)

Good luck, Mr. Doherty. You just
might make it.

The COOK, 60, big and black, is WAITING outside CC's office
with a tray of two sandwiches and two bowls of soup for Doc.

COOK

We thought maybe you could take
this to Doc.

Evan SMILES, and graciously TAKES the tray.

EVAN

Thanks for everything.

COOK

Best KP slave we ever had.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Evan KNOCKS on the door and WALKS right in. Doc is TREMBLING
fiercely and looks near-dead.

DOC

I'm fine. Let me rest. Go home.

Evan FEEDS Doc the soup. He CHANGES a few chess pieces. They
don't speak, but Doc's EYES are thanking Evan.

EVAN

Come home with me. We'll watch you.

Doc SHAKES his head 'no'. Evan REPLACES the oxygen bottle,
and Doc SLEEPS comfortably. Evan SHUTS OFF the light.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Good night, my dear friend.

Evan WIPES away TEARS and HEADS to the lobby to call Mary.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

SUPER: "8 P.M. - Four hours to go."

There is finally NO LINE at the phone. Evan CALLS and Mary PICKS UP.

BEGIN PHONE CONVERSATION

MARY (O.S.)

Hello.

EVAN

Hi Mary. I'm on my way at midnight.

MARY (O.S.)

We're just back from mass. Great Irish singers. Did you confess?

EVAN

Mary, I'll never drink again.

MARY (O.S.)

You knew our deal, Evan. It's not too late for Father Francis.

EVAN

I don't think that's necessary.

MARY (O.S.)

Drive home after confession and mass tomorrow. You can do it, Evan. I'll tell Martie. Don't fail us.

She hangs up.

END PHONE CONVERSATION

Evan TAKES OUT his journal and WRITES the last few pages. He WRITES: "1. I'm a teacher. I have to teach people *how* to think, not *what* to think. 2. My one-step program is all I need to avoid alcohol. 3. It's my job to develop my off switch for alcohol, religion, and bullshit."

EVAN

(loudly)

Hey, I didn't mumble as I wrote. I'm getting better.

In one last act of defiance, Evan races to the cafeteria and edits the big sign that read "Change comes slowest to those who fail." He adds "to seek it!" with a permanent marker.

Exactly AT MIDNIGHT, Evan STEPS OUT of St. Michael's. The top is down in his inherited sports car as he heads back to Los Angeles. He DRIVES SLOWLY to feel the freedom. He takes the old Sierra Highway rather than the freeway.

Twenty minutes down the two-lane road, headlights approach him. He hears a loud POP. The other car SWERVES and SCREECHES into Evan's car, head on. CRASH!

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: "4 A.M."

Sign reads "Post-Op. Staff and Family Only"

Evan's left eye is BARELY OPEN. He cannot MOVE. Respirator tubes are SHOVED in his throat. He can HEAR the DOCTOR (35), in a blue gown COVERED with purple blood.

DOCTOR
We've done all we can.

MARY
(crying)
He's not in any pain is he?

Evan SEES Mary holding his hand, but he can't FEEL it.

EVAN (V.O.)
(thinking)
Mary, I moved my left eye. Look!

Evan SEES a doctor covered with blood. Mary TURNS away in TEARS.

DOCTOR
One of his buddies died instantly.

EVAN (V.O.)
(thinking)
Buddies? What Buddies?

MARY
(angry)
His two drinking buddies at Flannigan's were bringing him a six-pack for Saint Patty's Day.
(beat)
Why didn't Evan wait until morning?

EVAN (V.O.)
 (thinking)
 Oh my God! I just wanted to get
 home to you and Martie.

MARY
 He would have been happy to know
 that Kevin Flannigan came to take
 Bob Coakley to Saint Michael's.

EVAN (V.O.)
 (thinking)
 I heard that. I'm okay.

DOCTOR
 I'm afraid his vital signs are
 dipping fast. Are you sure this is
 what he wanted?

EVAN (V.O.)
 (thinking)
 I just need to sleep.

MARY
 His directives were clear. It's
 not what I want. God save his soul.

The doctor SWITCHES OFF the machines surrounding Evan.

DOCTOR
 Respirator off at 4:25 AM.

The doctor REMOVES the tubes from Evan's throat. Mary CRIES
 as Evan's one open eye DOESN'T MOVE. The monitors are SILENT.

EVAN (V.O.)
 (thinking)
 It's okay. I love you, Mary. I
 love you Martie, the chuisle mo
 chroi.

Suddenly, Evan COUGHS, and BREATHES on his own. The doctor is
 ASTONISHED. Mary RACES back to the bed.

MARY
 It's a miracle! This time, I'll
 never let you go. We'll never let
 you go. I love you so much, Evan
 Doherty.

DOCTOR
 His left eye moved. He heard you.
 It is either a miracle or his time
 wasn't up.

EXT./INT. EVAN'S HOME - DAY

SUPER: "Three weeks later - Home"

Evan exits Mary's car with the HELP of Martie and a CANE. As he LIMPS to the front door, he SEES Ponch is up on a ladder PAINTING the house. Ponche's CRUCIFIX is dangling.

MARTIE
Welcome home, Daddy.

MARY
Forever, darling.

EVAN
Is that Ponch painting our house?

MARY
Yes it is. Small world.

EVAN
(yells)
Hi Ponch. Great to see you, buddy.

PONCH
(yells)
Glad you're okay, buddy.

EVAN
(to Mary)
I didn't make it to confession.

MARY
You made it home. That took power.

EVAN
The power of keeping loved ones in
my head.

He puts his ARMS AROUND Mary and Martie and ENTERS his home. He SMELLS the air of a renewed marriage and family.

EVAN (CONT'D)
I'll be the best husband and father
the world has ever known.

MARTIE
I'll be right back, Daddy.

Martie RUNS to her room.

MARY
You've taught me a lot these past
few weeks, Evan.
(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

I've stopped blaming you. I've stopped blaming your drunk-driving buddies. I was consumed by hate until Martie read me pages from your journal.

EVAN

She's reading my journal?

MARY

We both have it memorized.

Mary's face SADDENS as she GUIDES Evan to a chair overlooking the GARDEN.

EVAN

What's wrong, Mary?

MARY

Doc died from a heroin overdose on March the nineteenth.

Martie comes in CLUTCHING Evan's journal.

MARTIE

We're so sorry, Daddy.

Evan BURIES his face in his hands.

MARY

We know how much you loved each other from your journal.

EVAN

Is that the newspaper story?

MARTIE

That mean lady, CC, said that Doc was a coward who faces eternal damnation for his suicide.

MARY

You have to publish your journal to clear his reputation.

MARTIE

Your story will help many others.

(beat)

It's Rehab that needs to get better!

Martie is PROUD of herself. Evan BEAMS with joy. Mary HUGS them both.

MARY

Like I said, we've learned a lot.

EVAN

There are two obituary clippings here? Doc's and

(beat)

Charles Johnson.

MARTIE

Charles Johnson, the last president of the Flat Earth Society died the same day as Doc David Hester, March nineteenth, two-thousand-one.

MARY

Mr. Johnson's obituary appeared in newspapers all over the world. Doc Hester's appeared in one.

EVAN

Doc saved my life.

MARTIE

And Mom realized that some bad ideas are just too slow to die.

MARY

You need to publish your journal.

MARTIE

Yes, Daddy. Your one-step program.

EVAN

(quietly)

You alone have the power to stay sober: keep your loved ones in your head.

MARTIE

You could call the book, Off Switch.

FADE OUT: