

SOBORING

Written by

Casey Costello

Pilot

OVER BLACK:

STONEY (V.O.)  
You ever hear the shit: *"I thought  
I hit rock bottom until I heard a  
knock from below...?"*

WE HEAR THE ESPN SPORTS CENTER INTRO MUSIC/STING:

SCOTT VAN PELT (O.S.)  
Declan "Stoney" McManus' luck with  
the criminal justice system has  
finally run out...

INT. ESPN SPORTS CENTER STUDIO - NIGHT

**SCOTT VAN PELT** (50s, VERY BALD, glasses) addresses us on TV.

SCOTT VAN PELT  
America's opioid epidemic has  
tackled yet another of the  
country's most promising young  
people...

Over Van Pelt's broadcast shoulder plays college football and  
basketball HIGHLIGHTS of **STONEY McMANUS**. He's awesome.

SCOTT VAN PELT (CONT'D)  
This time arguably the best college  
athlete of all time...

The video cuts to MUG shot of **STONEY** 21, mixed race.

SCOTT VAN PELT (CONT'D)  
Stoney McManus has been sentenced  
to 20 years in prison for this  
fifth and final charge of felony  
drug possession with intent to  
distribute...

TV footage of Stoney being escorted out of court in cuffs to  
a Prison Van, mobbed by media. Fading glory.

SCOTT VAN PELT (CONT'D)  
This is what you get when treating  
opportunity like butter won't melt  
in your mouth. Sad. We wish him  
well.

SFX: PRISON CELL DOOR SLIDES OPENS

STONEY (V.O.)  
Fuck you, dick-tip.

EXT/EST. SOUTHERN OHIO CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

A dreary prison.

INT. SOUTHERN OHIO CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - CONTINUOUS

**A 21 YEAR OLD STONEY** steps into his new cell in a fresh orange prison uniform.

STONEY (V.O.)

Addiction - and for hella cases  
sobriety - writes in black ink on  
asphalt.

He turns around to face us. Handsome, clean cut, eyes hallowed from years of drug abuse. And terrified.

STONEY (V.O.)

But yo, you ain't fucked up when  
you were young and dumb as a dog's  
foot? At least I ain't dead.  
Because truthfully, if life was  
fair... I shoulda been dead a long  
time ago.

Prison cell door SLAMS on Stoney's face.

**TITLE CARD: Soboring**

EXT. SOUTHERN OHIO CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

CHYRON: **10 YEARS LATER**

CORRECTIONS OFFICER (O.S.)

Stoney?!

INT. SOUTHERN OHIO CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - CONTINUOUS

C.O. approaches a cell door and opens it. We see the bare, muscular, tattooed back of a BIG MAN. Shaved head. Built like he could bite a phone book in half.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER

Ready?

He reads "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance." He turns around to face us, covered in tattoos up to his neck.

This is **STONEY McMANUS** at 32yo, bigger, and painted in make-shift prison ink. He slides on a white t-shirt and exits.

EXT. PRISON - LATER

Stoney exits and looks around. No media. No fans. No glory.

INT. PAROLE OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Stoney sits in a cramped lobby with some lower lot looking CHARACTERS and CRIMINALS.

WILL SCHWARTZ (O.S.)  
Declan McManus!...

The MALE CRIMINAL-CHARACTERS react to his name and look up.

Stoney stands and greets a fat white man: **WILL SCHWARTZ**, 40s, sweaty, thinks he's hilarious.

WILL SCHWARTZ (CONT'D)  
Hi, Will Schwartz, nice to meet  
you.

Stoney nods as they shake.

INT. WILL SCHWARTZ'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

It's WWII for Will to sit in his chair but he squeezes in.

WILL SCHWARTZ  
So, I'll be your parole officer.  
Thanks for coming in to see me  
right away. Most don't.

Will laughs big. Stoney smiles stiff.

WILL SCHWARTZ (CONT'D)  
Alright, here are the conditions:  
you'll be living in a sober living  
for the next year, abiding by all  
their rules, testing there randomly  
- if you come up dirty even once  
you'll be expelled from the house  
and I'm throwing you back in the  
cooler. Think you can stay out of  
trouble?

Stoney nods.

WILL SCHWARTZ (CONT'D)  
Hope so. And they're gonna have  
rules like five meetings a week,  
getting a sponsor, chores, curfew,  
etc.

Will prints out the address and hands it to him.

WILL SCHWARTZ (CONT'D)  
Don't worry, it's like summer camp -  
without the panty raids.

Another big Will laugh. Stoney stone-faces him this time.

WILL SCHWARTZ (CONT'D)  
And I will need you to get a job.

STONEY  
How? I'm a felon.

WILL SCHWARTZ  
Then think less Fortune 500 and  
more burger flipping.

Fuck.

WILL SCHWARTZ (CONT'D)  
And you'll be seeing a therapist  
once a week. Dr. Karen Moore.  
Here's her contact info. She's  
expecting your call to set  
everything up ASAP.

Will slides him a business card with her name on it.

WILL SCHWARTZ (CONT'D)  
And of course, you'll have the  
privilege of seeing my happy,  
handsome face once a month.

Will laughs big again. Stoney busts out laughing too - but  
bigger, startling Will.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

An Uber speeds up in a ROAR.

IPHONE VOICE (O.S.)  
Arrived.

SCREECH! As the Uber skids to a stop.

Then peels out in reverse to a happy sign announcing the  
destination: **SERENITY NOW! HOUSE.**

UBER DRIVER  
(reads sign)  
Ser-en.. Ser-e-en-i-tie?

STONEY  
"Serenity."

UBER DRIVER  
Serenity.

STONEY  
"Now."

UBER DRIVER  
I know "Now," guy.

GIRL VOICE (O.S.)  
Hey, dipshit!

We pan over to a WOMAN: **SHANNON HODGSON**, 25, an iron fist in a velvet glove. She pulls a trash can in off the street.

SHANNON  
Slow the fuck down!

UBER DRIVER  
Why? You need a ride?

SHANNON  
You need a butthole?

UBER DRIVER  
Then how 'bout a belly ride?

Stoney exits Uber.

SHANNON  
You a virgin?

UBER DRIVER  
Uhh--no.

SHANNON  
You will be after I'm done with you.

Stoney cracks up.

SHANNON (CONT'D)  
'Fuck you laughing at, junkie?

Stoney stops. But holds his gaze on her, digging in.

INT./EXT. SERENITY NOW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The front door swings open to find **YOLANDA**, 35, Asian, edgy-sweet, always in short-shorts & tank top. She's flighty but only because her brain and body operate at light speed.

YOLANDA  
Hi!! Declan McManus?

STONEY  
Yep.

YOLANDA  
I'm Yolanda, the house manager, so nice to meet you.

STONEY  
Nice to--

YOLANDA  
Come in--come in.

He steps in and takes in the place, which is decorated with signs, warnings and motivational/positivity posters like:

THE SERENITY PRAYER OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, NO VAPING IN THE HOUSE, SERENITY/COURAGE/PRAYER, the banners of both the 12 STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, and the 12 TRADITIONS OF AA.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)  
So this is the TV room - where we'll all meet for house meetings every Saturday morning at 11...

Big TV, comfy couches, not bad.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)  
And when you'll turn in your A.A. or N.A. meeting cards for the week. Kitchen is through there--

**BART & EDUARDO** argue about politics as they cook.

**BART** is 55, white, MAGA, has tics that may indicate Tourette syndrome, is too opinionated to be termed mentally handicapped and too aggressive to be termed on the spectrum, he's just wet-brained from half a century of partying.

**EDUARDO** is 43, Mexican-American, gay, buff, wicked smart, but off his meds he's acutely depressed, suicidal, and dangerous.

EDUARDO  
Trump is not a good businessman, man! He been bankrupt more times--

BART  
Doesn't matter! He still comes out  
on top! Look at him! He was the  
goddamn President--

EDUARDO  
Was! One term--

BART  
--of a country you don't belong in--

EDUARDO  
I was born here, you wet-brained  
troglodyte--

BART  
I ain't no dyke!

EDUARDO  
Not related, but you're finally  
admitting you don't like women? I  
knew you was straight as an eight.

BART  
What?! No--

YOLANDA  
Guys! Stop watching cable news  
together. It's bad for your healing  
brains. Stick to "Cops" and "Wolf  
of Wall Street."

They idle.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)  
Bart and Eduardo - this is Declan.

BART  
Hi, I'm Bart and I'm an alcoholic.  
And I have multiple-personality  
disorder, so if you come upon a guy  
named *Diego*, but he looks like me,  
that's just me as Diego in my MPD  
affliction.

STONEY  
Bart. And Diego. Got it.

EDUARDO  
Hey man, welcome. I'm Eduardo and  
I'm a devout METHodist.



BART  
That means he's a tweaker. And he's gay.

STONEY  
Stoney. I'm a sewer, dumpster, felon. Pleasure.

BART  
So is it Stoney or Declan?

STONEY  
Stoney's fine.

BART  
Why?

EDUARDO  
Because he hits em and sinks em like a stone.

Eduardo recognizes him.

EDUARDO (CONT'D)  
Right?

Stoney subtly nods.

BART  
Cool. Are you gay?

STONEY  
No. And I don't care where you stick your prick or push your bush.

EDUARDO  
Right on, homie.

Bart & Eduardo smile and go back to cooking. For each other.

BART  
(re: steak)  
You like yours medium-rare, right?

EDUARDO  
Of course. I'm an aristocrat. I'm adding cranberries to the salad tonight, if that's cool...

BART  
Bitchin'.

Stoney smirks.

YOLANDA

Let me show you to your room-- oh  
and I have to search your bag--  
we'll do it in here...

As they walk to the room we suddenly hear LOUD RAP MUSIC.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

Charles!

She opens the room door to find **CHARLES LOPEZ**, 19, Mexican-American, wanna-be gangsta. He has tattoos on his neck and a small one on his face and speaks quickly and sloppily with a lisp. Annunciation is not his friend.

Charles is shirtless as he dances.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

Charles!

He turns.

CHARLES

What's up, baby?!

YOLANDA

Not your baby and I'm not gonna  
tell you again. Keep your music  
down or I'm writing you up.

He turns it down.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

This is your new roommate Declan.

CHARLES

Pfft. What's up, old?

Stoney just stares.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

(laughs)

I'm just playin', homie. Charles --

He goes for a fist bump, but Stoney just stares.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Sensitive. That's cool, you can  
fuck with me-- oh, hold up. Why you  
look familiar..?

Charles takes him in for a beat.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
 Oh, shit! You Stoney McManus! Oh  
 fuck, homie! You da man, bro!

YOLANDA  
 (to Stoney)  
 Who are you?

STONEY  
 No one. Search my bag?

He throws it on a made up bed. Charles' bed is a mess.  
 Yolanda searches his bag.

STONEY (CONT'D)  
 You know anyone hiring felons?

YOLANDA  
 Umm--

CHARLES  
 I do!

STONEY  
 Where?

CHARLES  
 My joint. Twirlin' pies and dunkin'  
 fries, yo. I get'chu a gig.

STONEY  
 Yeah?

CHARLES  
 Yeah. The boss is my boy. I'm  
 headin' over there right now, so  
 saddle up, yo.

STONEY  
 Right on-- Oh, can I go with him,  
 Yolanda?

YOLANDA  
 Sure. But first I have to UA test  
 you. Can you pee right now?

CHARLES  
 I can't but I'll whip it out.

YOLANDA  
 Charles.

STONEY  
 Yes, I can.

CHARLES

You go number 1 right quick and  
I'ma gonna crank a number 3 right  
quick to loosen up.

Charles opens his phone's web browser to porn.

YOLANDA

Oh my god.

Yolanda exits and Stoney follows.

CHARLES

Shut the door, weirdos!

Stoney head-shakes as he shuts the door. He turns in the hallway to find a SERENITY PRAYER POSTER, which begins:

*"God, grant the serenity, to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things that I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."*

Stoney inhales/exhales, and follows Yolanda to piss.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - LATER

Stoney and Charles approach the job joint.

CHARLES

The boss-man busts balls, but he  
cool as a mug. You see.

INT. PIZZA GUYS - CONTINUOUS

They enter.

CHARLES

Sit right there, and I'll get the  
big man to size you up and shit.

Charles heads to the back. Stoney sits at a table.

Charles returns with his shirt tucked in (but his pants still sagging), eye glasses and clip board.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Declan McManus?

STONEY

Uh, yeah. *Charles.*

CHARLES

Charles Lopez, nice to meet you,  
thanks for coming in to Pizza Guys.

Charles extends his hand for an official hand shake.

STONEY

What is this?

CHARLES

An interview.

STONEY

With you?

CHARLES

Of course. I'm the manager.

STONEY

(of course)

You're the *boss man*.

Stoney chuckles and shakes his hand, gripping it hard causing Charles to grimace before Stoney releases him.

STONEY (CONT'D)

Nice to meet you, Mr. Lopez.

CHARLES

Like wise. Now, tell me about  
yourself, Ston-- Declan.

STONEY

Well, Chuck. I was born at an early  
age. Then I did drugs. Then I went  
to prison. And now I have to get a  
job or I go back to prison.

(leans in mean)

And I don't wanna go back to  
prison, Chuck. Do you want me to go  
back to prison?

Charles clears his throat.

CHARLES

Welcome to Pizza Guy! Whippets to  
celebrate!

STONEY

What?

CHARLES

It's just nitrous-oxy, doesn't show  
up in tests.

STONEY

Fuck. No.

Off Stoney's resolution --

WHIPPET MONTAGE:

-- Charles fills balloons from a standing nitrous oxide tank.

-- They laugh uncontrollably.

-- They fall down laughing.

-- They inhale more balloons.

-- They drape pizza dough over their heads and pull it down to their shoulders so they can't see.

-- Stoney rings up a CUSTOMER in his dough-hat with eye-holes cut out.

-- Still high on hippie crack, they sit on the floor stretching out dough, in a brain-burnt heart to heart:

STONEY (CONT'D)

You gotta be-ware, bro.

CHARLES

I know, bro, I know what's up.

STONEY

You don't know shit.

CHARLES

And what do you know, homie?

STONEY

Here's what I know, yo, you young dumb shit. Your tweens are when you're first learning about dumb shit, your teens is when you start to practice dumb shit, your twenties is when you start to perfect dumb shit, your thirties is when you start to worry about dumb shit, your forties is when you start to regret dumb shit, and your 50s and 60s are for hopefully not repeating dumb shit.

Stoney whirls his stretched pizza dough in the air... and it lands on Charles' head covering his face. Silence.

WHIPPET MONTAGE END:

LATER - They slump on the kitchen floor asleep. Charles still wears the dough on his head, but with a mouth hole to breath.

MAN (O.S.)

Charles!

Charles snaps awake.

CHARLES

Shit.

Charles de-doughs and slaps Stoney, waking him from a dream --

STONEY

Gimme the ball...  
(looks around)  
The fuck...

CHARLES

Sober up. Boss man is here.

STONEY

I thought you were--

CHARLES

The store manager-- Get up, look  
busy and legit.

Charles bursts thru the kitchen door to greet the boss man...

INT. PIZZA GUYS - CONTINUOUS

Who is **WILL SCHWARTZ!** Stoney's parole officer! He stands annoyed at the cash register since no one was manning it.

CHARLES

Hey, Will.

WILL SCHWARTZ

What are you doing, Charles?

CHARLES

Just training the new hire.

WILL SCHWARTZ

New who?

CHARLES

You wanted me to bring in a new  
fool so I did.

WILL SCHWARTZ

Oh right. Love the initiative. Your P.O. is gonna like to hear that - I'll be sure to share that with her at the office.

CHARLES

Thanks, homie.

WILL SCHWARTZ

Charles...

CHARLES

Thank you, Mr. Schwartz, sir.

WILL SCHWARTZ

Better. So who's the new guy?

CHARLES

Stoney McManus. Great guy. Lots of experience.

WILL SCHWARTZ

Oh yeah, Johnny Football. Where is he?

The phone rings and Will snaps it up.

WILL SCHWARTZ (CONT'D)

Pizza Guys, how can I help you?..  
Delivery, no problem, sir... Large pepperoni...

Will writes down the order and address. Hangs up.

Stoney enters thru the kitchen door, looking somewhat straight and sober. Scared straight and sober.

WILL SCHWARTZ (CONT'D)

Johnny Football!

STONEY

Hello, Mr. Schwartz.

WILL SCHWARTZ

"Mr. Schwartz?" Are you stoned, Stoney?

CHARLES

He could eat.

WILL SWARTZ

Huh?--



STONEY  
No no no, I'm straight. Sir.

CHARLES  
(chuckles)  
Straight as an eight.

Stoney side/stink-eyes him. Will thinks about this phrase as he eyes a smirking Charles. Something's up.

WILL SCHWARTZ  
Get to work, you two. Get this delivered, Charles. Take him with you.

STONEY  
Yes, sir.

CHARLES  
(obnoxiously compliant)  
YES SIR!

Charles chuckles as he starts making the pizza.

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

Stoney and Charles approach the delivery house. Charles carries the pizza. Knocks on the door.

STONEY  
You almost fucked me back there, Charles.

CHARLES  
Relax. I'm about to make it right. Just follow my lead.

STONEY  
Handing over a pizza?

Ignores him. The door opens to a cloud of pot smoke and a guy named **JIMMY**, white, 22, too skinny. Charles smiles big.

CHARLES  
Pizza Guy! Large pepperoni?

JIMMY  
Right on. Put it on the table there...

They enter.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Charles sets the pizza on the coffee table.

JIMMY  
(re: Stoney)  
He cool?

CHARLES  
Yeah.

Jimmy pulls a WAD OF CASH from his pocket.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
What'chu need?

JIMMY  
10 oxy.

Charles pulls his eye glass case from his pocket, opens it revealing PILLS in plastic baggies.

He selects a baggie and stuffs the case back in his pocket.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
400, right?

CHARLES  
5.

JIMMY  
500?!?

CHARLES  
Don't junkie me, Jimmy. Post-pandie  
prices, plague.

Stoney stands stunned. And drooling at the drugs.

Jimmy whips \$500 from his \$5,000 wad and hands it over.  
Charles hands over the pills. Notices something, points --

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Nice shoes, guy. Where'd you get  
those? Europe..?

Jimmy looks down at his shoes-- WHAM! As Charles uppercut-sucker punches him!

Jimmy stumbles back into the wall.

STONEY  
Yo!

Charles steps up to punch him again. And again. Until Stoney snaps out of it and yanks him off.

Jimmy lays unconscious and bloody.

STONEY (CONT'D)  
The fuck you doing?!

CHARLES  
(to Jimmy in Spanish)  
Putá.

Charles rips the fat \$5k wad of cash from Jimmy's hand, and scoops the pill bag off the floor.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
(smiles calmly)  
Ready?

Charles heads out. Then re-enters, opens the pizza box and grabs a slice. Exits.

Stoney stands stunned. Then checks Jimmy's pulse to ensure he's alive. He is. Then Stoney looks at his own fingers.

Grabs a kitchen towel and wipes off Jimmy's neck where he touched. Then the door handle. Looks around - what else..?

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Stoney shuts the door with the towel protecting his prints, scurries out and gets in the car. Charles rips away.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Charles drives nonchalant. Now Stoney's pissed.

STONEY  
You wanna explain yourself,  
Charles?

CHARLES  
He had it comin'.

STONEY  
What if he comes after you seekin'  
retribution? You know him like  
that?

CHARLES

Don't trip on me and mine. I got a dirty snub buried underground for a cold blooded day just like this, yo.

STONEY

Oh so you got an untraceable gun now, hard-on?

CHARLES

Teachin' for steppin'.

STONEY

Big baller shot caller, huh?

CHARLES

That's right.

STONEY

You an idiot. Just a'ignorant punk who couldn't scare a kitten with a heart condition!

CHARLES

Yo! Fuck that lil white fortunate son! Every time I make a drop for him he flash that stack. He'll be doin' 30 days in a Malibu junkie barn cryin' his eyes out once his parents catch on and drag him off.

STONEY

And you'll be doin' 30 years for what can be charged as Home Invasion. A felony.

CHARLES

Pfft. A felony ain't nothin'. All a felony do is put shit in perspective.

STONEY

No, it put shit in a box. Which you'll be checking every time you apply for a job or try to buy a stamp.

CHARLES

Whatever. Ain't nobody gonna know. He's too zany'd up to remember anything anyhow.

STONEY  
You realize you just made a  
delivery...

CHARLES  
Oh, that's right - and so did you.  
Here's your cut...

Charles pulls out the wad and breaks off \$1,000 to Stoney.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Keep up the good work.

Stoney eyes it. Lotta dough on his first day of freedom.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Welcome to Pizza Guys. I need you  
in at 9AM tomorrow.

STONEY  
Can't.

CHARLES  
Why?

STONEY  
I have rectal glaucoma.

CHARLES  
What the fuck that mean?

Charles pulls into Pizza Guys.

STONEY  
Rectal glaucoma means that I don't  
see my ass coming into work. I  
quit.

Stoney gets out and splits. Charles watches him go. Then  
looks down on the seat to see the \$1k Stoney left behind.

INT. SERENITY NOW HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Stoney lies on his side with his back to us. We drift over to  
see his eyes - wide open. He looks at the clock: 6:00 AM. He  
didn't sleep a wink. He turns over to see Charles asleep.

He gets out of bed and moves to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He brushes his teeth, spits, throws water on his face. He stares at himself in the mirror. Then with disgust --

STONEY

Fuck off.

He moves off the reflection, leaving a dirty mirror.

INT. DR. KAREN MOORE'S OFFICE - DAY

An anxious, uncomfortable Stoney sits across from **DR. KAREN MOORE**, 50s, black, a sweetened force of nature.

DR. KAREN

Ok. Stoney. So, you just did some time.

STONEY

Big time.

DR. KAREN

Why? Why were you in prison?

STONEY

This is America.

She smirks: true.

DR. KAREN

How was it?

STONEY

Fun for the whole family.

She smiles.

STONEY (CONT'D)

Like living in a litter box.

DR. KAREN

How much time did you do?

STONEY

10 years.

DR. KAREN

And how long have you been sober?

STONEY

10 years.

She takes him in for a beat.

DR. KAREN

That's great. Amazing.  
 Congratulations, Stoney. Prison is  
 not an easy place to be sober-- oh,  
 just so we're clear, I forgot to  
 mention that everything you share  
 with me is confidential, and will  
 not be shared with authorities like  
 the police. Or your P.O.

Beat, then --

STONEY

6 months.

DR. KAREN

Sober?

He nervously nods.

DR. KAREN (CONT'D)

Not 10 years?

He nervously shakes his head.

DR. KAREN (CONT'D)

Why did you stop using 6 months  
 ago?

STONEY

The Man wouldn't give me a locked  
 in release date, but I had a rough  
 idea. And as I got closer to it I  
 knew I could test dirty once  
 released if I didn't stop, so I  
 padded it.

DR. KAREN

Because if you were sprung by  
 surprise you'd go right back in.

STONEY

Which I can't even say would be so  
 bad.

DR. KAREN

Why do you say that? You're free.

STONEY

Free without structure.

DR. KAREN  
 It'll be an adjustment. A  
 challenge. But if something doesn't  
 challenge you, it doesn't change  
 you.

Stoney balls his fists.

DR. KAREN (CONT'D)  
 And six months of sobriety is still  
 amazing, Stoney. You should be  
 proud of yourself.

Stoney feigns appreciation. And interest in this sit-down.

DR. KAREN (CONT'D)  
 So you kicked in the clink?

STONEY  
 Like a jackass shittin' a  
 porcupine.

She laughs.

**INT. PRISON CELL - FLASHBACK**

Stoney lies naked on his cell floor sweating, shaking and  
 crying. Puke and diarrhea surround him.

**BACK TO PRESENT:**

DR. KAREN  
 And look at you now. Smiling like a  
 jackass eatin' cactus.

He smirks.

DR. KAREN (CONT'D)  
 How do you sleep?

STONEY  
 I don't. I just lie there and  
 nightmare.

DR. KAREN  
 How are you adjusting since getting  
 out?

STONEY  
 Eh. Strikes and gutters.

DR. KAREN  
 Ups and downs. Like real life.



STONEY

Feels weird.

DR. KAREN

As it should. You just have to get comfortable with feeling uncomfortable.

STONEY

I like that. I should start speaking in motivational memes too.

She smiles.

DR. KAREN

I'm an alcoholic and a drug addict too, Stoney. And I can tell you-- I haven't drank or used in a whole lotta years, and I couldn't tell you the last time I did. But ask me the last time I was selfish or dishonest? And I can tell ya... today, all day.

He pretends to listen, but he's somewhere else.

DR. KAREN (CONT'D)

It's just part of who we are. But we can change. I did. But I had to do the work, and I had to act my way into thinking instead of thinking my way into acting. Follow me?

STONEY

Maybe. Yeah. No. I think.

DR. KAREN

Just know that I know where you're coming from.

He nods, but not comforted.

DR. KAREN (CONT'D)

It's just some shit you gotta dig yourself out of.

STONEY

Got a shovel?

She takes him in. He looks away nervously. Antsy. Wants out.

DR. KAREN

*Shovel?* You gonna need a backhoe,  
boy.

A chuckle escapes him.

DR. KAREN (CONT'D)

I want to see you once a week. Can  
you do that?

STONEY

Can if I don't have a choice.

DR. KAREN

Big decisions are easy when you  
have no other option.

Stoney looks this off.

DR. KAREN (CONT'D)

Good. Now get to a meeting.

We hold on Stoney as we PRE-LAP --

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

I don't share a whole lot, and  
that's because I'm mostly impressed  
with my own thoughts.

People LAUGH.

EST./EXT. CHURCH - AA MEETING - NIGHT

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

"Self." "Self" is my real enemy. If  
drugs and alcohol are cunning,  
baffling, and powerful - "Self" is  
a son of a bitch.

INT. CHURCH - AA MEETING - NIGHT

**60 ALCOHOLICS** and **ADDICTS** sit and listen to a **SPEAKER** sharing  
her story at a podium. SHANNON from earlier is the speaker.

SHANNON

I'm an alcoholic and addict. I've  
never made the right decisions  
until I've made all the wrong ones.  
I try to shoot, snort and drink  
away the part of the day that I  
cannot think away.

Stoney enters late, standing in the back. Shannon notices him and pauses for a beat to take him in.

SHANNON (CONT'D)  
 But yeah, I'm a trash can, so it  
 doesn't matter as long as it--  
 (points at her brain)  
 pleases my matter. Fuck, if dog  
 shit got me high, I'd follow dogs  
 around all day.

Laughs.

SHANNON (CONT'D)  
 I've hit rock bottom. A few times.  
 And each time I thought I hit my  
 final, lowest, can't dig any deeper  
 bottom... I'd hear a knock from  
 below.

Stoney listens.

SHANNON (CONT'D)  
 I've heard that the definition of  
 rock bottom is when life's  
 conditions deteriorate faster than  
 you can lower your standards. If  
 that's true, then I couldn't lower  
 them fast enough.

AAers chuckle in agreement.

SHANNON (CONT'D)  
 "Incomprehensible demoralization."  
 And I'm grateful for it.

AAers nod. Stoney stares transfixed on her. Shannon eyes the  
 NEWCOMERS. Then Stoney, before looking away.

SHANNON (CONT'D)  
 There's a life we learn with, and a  
 life we live with. Sometimes all we  
 can do is reside in the former. I  
 wouldn't trade these two years of  
 sobriety for anything. Because I'm  
 finally living.  
 (small beat)  
 My name's Shannon and I'm an  
 alcoholic, addict. Thanks.

AAers APPLAUD, but Shannon interrupts it by picking up a BOOK  
 off the podium and raising it --

SHANNON (CONT'D)

We give away literature at this meeting and tonight - like every night - it's a complimentary Big Book to any newcomer fleetest on feet to claim it and a welcome hug...

As she scans the crowd looking for a claimer-- suddenly Stoney is right in front of her to claim the prize. And the welcome hug - the real prize - as AAers APPLAUD.

As they de-hug, Stoney searches for eye-contact, but doesn't get it - until he's walking away.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

(instigating)

Who are you?!

Stoney stops, turns, and eyes her confidently.

STONEY

Stoney.

Not getting how this works, he turns and continues walking to the back, thinking he's got her. *Fortune favors the bold.*

SHANNON

And..?

He stops and turns again, now confused.

STONEY

And...? McManus..?

She head-shakes/chuckles: "*Newcomers.*" He continues on, now self-conscious.

But a few MEN take excited notice of his full name.

EXT. CHURCH - AA MEETING - LATER

The meeting is over, AAers socialize and smoke outside.

Shannon smokes and chats with a GUY & GIRL.

STONEY (O.S.)

Howdy, neighbor.

Shannon turns to him.

STONEY (CONT'D)

I really liked your... speech.

SHANNON

Thanks.

She turns back to her friends.

STONEY

Got an extra smoke?

She turns and extends one.

STONEY (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Stoney digs for a lighter. Shannon hands him one.

STONEY (CONT'D)

Thanks. Again.

(lights it)

My name's Stoney.

SHANNON

Nice to meet you.

She turns away again.

STONEY

And McManus.

She turns back.

SHANNON

I know. I'm Shannon. And I'm an alcoholic and an addict.

STONEY

I know-- Ohhhh...

Now he catches what he missed.

SHANNON

Yeahhhh...

He chuckles, embarrassed, but not enough to quit.

STONEY

So, "Shannon?" Like the river.

SHANNON

The river?

STONEY

In Ireland. The River Shannon. Have you seen it?

SHANNON

No.

STONEY

Oh, you should. The Shannon is beautiful.

Is she blushing?

STONEY (CONT'D)

A little dirty though.

She chuckles despite herself.

SHANNON

What's your DOC?

STONEY

D-O-what?

SHANNON

Drug of Choice.

STONEY

Right. I guess I'd have to say... more.

She smirks in agreement.

STONEY (CONT'D)

But booze is my first love.

SHANNON

Me too.

(quoting)

*"Booze is the Mother's ruin."*

He nods and drags on the butt.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

How much time you have?

STONEY

6 months.

SHANNON

Too bad.

STONEY

Why?

SHANNON

Hit me up when you get a year.

STONEY

A year?

SHANNON

You're not supposed to date within  
the first year of recovery.

STONEY

Who's talking about *dating*?

SHANNON

Not me.

STONEY

You think I want to date you?

SHANNON

I know you do.

Damn.

STONEY

Why can't I date for a year?

SHANNON

Because you have work to do.

STONEY

Work? Where?

SHANNON

(touches his head)

Here...

(touches his heart)

Here...

(touches his belly)

And here.

STONEY

You think I'm fat?

She laughs.

GIRL VOICE (O.S.)

Shannon?

They turn to her girlfriend ALYSSA.

ALYSSA

Ready?

SHANNON

Yeah.  
 (to Stoney)  
 Nice to meet you, Stoney.

STONEY

Nice to meet you too. Under more  
 civilized circumstances.

She smiles.

SHANNON

Keep coming back.

She splits. Stoney watches her. In love.

INT. SERENITY NOW HOUSE - LATER

Stoney enters. It's dark. Peaceful.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(Mexican gangster accent)  
 Who the fuck are you?

Stoney startles to see the figure of a MAN sits in the dark.

STONEY

Who are you?

MAN'S VOICE

I asked you first, motherfucker.

STONEY

Turn the light on and I'll tell  
 you.

MAN'S VOICE

Your funeral, puta.

The Man flicks light on and BART sits in a chair under it.

He's taken on the personality of the Mexican gangster named  
**DIEGO**, complete with baggy Dickies shorts, wife beater and a  
 red bandana wrapped around his head. He files his long nails.

STONEY

Bart?

BART/DIEGO

No.

STONEY

Oh, you must be Diego.



BART/DIEGO  
You got a problem with that, ese?

STONEY  
Nope. Pleasure, Diego. Good night.

Eduardo enters and flicks on the TV to an NHL hockey game.

EDUARDO  
Diego. Get your ass to bed.

Bart/Diego stands and goes to his room.

STONEY  
'Night, Diego-Bart.

BART/DIEGO  
Fuck Bart.

As Bart/Diego walks he starts SINGING a happy tune:

BART/DIEGO (CONT'D)  
*I'm a wasted rock ranger / I live  
the life of danger / smoking all  
that crystal and cocaine...*

Stoney chuckles.

EDUARDO  
(re: game)  
Forecheck, motherfuckers!

STONEY  
You like hockey?

EDUARDO  
Beat a man with a stick until he  
gives you what you want? Fuck yeah.  
I call it foreplay.

Stoney laughs and heads to his room.

EDUARDO (CONT'D)  
Hey, Stoney?

He turns.

EDUARDO (CONT'D)  
How high were you at the New York  
Athletic Club in '06?

STONEY  
You could tell?

EDUARDO

The Heisman Trophy looks heavy, but  
not that heavy.

STONEY

Let's see... 2004 was grass...

EDUARDO

I remember the laugh.

Stoney laughs.

STONEY

2005 was booze and glass. So, 2006  
I must of been blotto on... heroin.

EDUARDO

That's what I thought.

STONEY

(goofing)  
Want an autograph?

EDUARDO

(laughs)  
What I want is to hold a 4-time  
Heisman winner's Heisman.

STONEY

Pfft. I pawned that anvil in China  
Town and shot it in my neck an hour  
after they handed it to me.

EDUARDO

Regret it?

STONEY

I'd have to remember it to regret  
it.

EDUARDO

It's not what we remember that can  
kill us. It's what we forget.

Stoney processes this as he nods 'night to Eduardo.

INT. SERENITY NOW HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stoney enters to see Charles sits on his bed listening to  
music thru ear-buds. He doesn't acknowledge Stoney.

Stoney changes and gets into bed, his back to Charles.  
Charles removes his ear-buds.

CHARLES

Yo, man--

STONEY

Shut your head-hole.

CHARLES

Will was asking 'bout you.

STONEY

You tell him why I quit?

CHARLES

Alright, so I run a little business on the side, but I ain't using the shit, and I've never gotten violent before.

STONEY

*Business* on the side? Then take that shit to Shark Tank, not around me.

Charles laughs.

STONEY (CONT'D)

Motherfucker, I'm living hand to asshole here. You know what's worse than being incarcerated? Waiting to be incarcerated. One slip and I'm back in. And that slip don't depend on the size of the slope. Bunny hill or black diamond - don't matter on the slip.

CHARLES

I just... wanted you to see.

STONEY

See what? See the beginning of the end of your life?

CHARLES

See me handlin' my own. Like a man.

STONEY

Shit, Charles. Men don't do what you did.

CHARLES

What they do?

STONEY

Help people.

CHARLES  
Maybe you can help me be a good  
man.

STONEY  
No I can't help you be a good man,  
and I don't want to.

Charles sulks.

STONEY (CONT'D)  
But I can help you be good at being  
a man.

Charles smiles and nods.

STONEY (CONT'D)  
But you gotta stop.

CHARLES  
Stop what?

STONEY  
Dealing. Misbehaving.

CHARLES  
I'll slow down.

STONEY  
No. Stop.

CHARLES  
Same difference as slow.

Stoney hops up, jumps on Charles, pins him down and starts  
wailing on his thigh --

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Yo! Ow!--

STONEY  
You want me to stop?!

Beat-beat-beat -- brutal.

CHARLES  
Get the fuck off me! Ow!

STONEY  
Or do you want me to slow down?!

Beat-beat-beat --

CHARLES  
Stop! Stop!

Stoney hops off him. Charles rubs him tenderized thigh.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Is that what a good man do,  
motherfucker?!

STONEY  
Teachin' for steppin'.

CHARLES  
Fuck you!

STONEY  
I'll help you be good at being a  
man as long as you help me be good  
at stayin' out of the bucket.  
(beat)  
Deal..?

CHARLES  
Right on, tampon.

STONEY  
Good night, you little suck pump.

Stoney turns over to sleep.

CHARLES  
Yo, Stoney... You ever gonna play  
ball again?

STONEY  
Which one?

CHARLES  
Either?

STONEY  
No.

CHARLES  
Why not?

STONEY  
Because I got a lot on my plate and  
karma's in the kitchen cookin'.  
Good night, Chuck.

Beat.

CHARLES  
What's prison like?

STONEY  
Days like lost dogs.

As Charles tries to process this, Stoney closes his eyes - to lie there and nightmare.

EXT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Cops, EMTs and a coroner van are parked out front. Yellow police ribbon crosses the front door.

STONEY (V.O.)  
I'm a guy starting my life over  
from 'Go.' From the first step.  
"Step 1" if you will...

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy's body lies lifeless. CORONERS survey the scene.

His shaken roommate **TYLER** (22, white) is interviewed by **DETECTIVE DEACON HOWLER** (30s, black, no BS street Mensa).

TYLER  
I came home this morning and he was  
like that. Just swollen and dead--

DETECTIVE HOWLER  
Do you know if he had any visitors  
last night or the night before?

TYLER  
No.

DETECTIVE HOWLER  
He do drugs?

TYLER  
Ummm...

DETECTIVE HOWLER  
I'm not asking if you do drugs,  
Tyler, I'm asking if your dead  
friend did drugs?

Tyler nods nervously. Howler notes it.

Howler eyes the pizza box on the table. Opens it with his pen to find 1 slice missing, then eyes the receipt on the box.

STONEY (V.O.)

But I'm also at a crossroads - a  
guy caught between the past and the  
present. Hubris and humility. The  
truth and the lie...

DETECTIVE HOWLER

Jason, you got a time of death?

CORONER JASON

We just got here, Howler.

DETECTIVE HOWLER

Ball park...

CORONER JASON

I don't know... 9, maybe 10pm the  
night before last.

CU ON RECEIPT: ORDER TIME: "9:05. Tuesday"

DETECTIVE HOWLER

(bingo, sotto)

30 minutes or less.

STONEY (V.O.)

The truth tell me this: I'm an  
alcoholic and an addict. I've never  
made the right decisions until I've  
made all the wrong ones.

DETECTIVE HOWLER

What up, Pizza Guy.

STONEY

The lie? The lie is just the  
illusiv *why*. Why I use. Why I fuck  
up.

Howler puts the receipt in an evidence bag.

STONEY (V.O.)

But I can't think on the negative  
about all that. I just gotta stay  
present and in the now... what I  
can control. Don't look too far  
back, don't look too far forward.

Howler eyes the dish towel Stoney used to clean his prints.

## STONEY

If I have to look forward to  
something it's gotta be looking  
forward to a life *soboring* that I  
ain't never wanna look back. Or  
hear another knock from below.

END OF PILOT