

Running Head: AMERICAN ADDICTION

An Epidemic: The Rise in Prescription Drug Abuse

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Abstract

This study of prescription drug abuse examines the epidemic and rising concern of addiction to prescription medication such as opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, and morphine. Key themes examine how the effects of an addiction are not only detrimental to the individual, but also their relationships. A combination of research on addiction through literature and observing documentary/narrative films was utilized. Findings present evidence about addiction and how many addictions are similar in the side effects and dependency an individual experiences. Finally, a digital video project, *American Addiction*, visualizes the themes through a fictional story about a young man who falls victim to prescription drug addiction.

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Prescription Drug Abuse

“When I was in medical school, the one thing I was told was completely wrong. The one I was told was, if you give opiates to a patient who’s in pain, they will not get addicted. Completely wrong. Completely wrong. But a generation of doctors, a generation of us grew up being trained that these drugs aren’t risky. In fact, they are risky,”

– **Dr. Thomas Frieden, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.**

Prescription drug abuse in America is at an epidemic level. Dr. Frieden understands the risky nature of prescription drugs that are being labeled as a ‘harmless medicine’ and ‘non-addictive’ in some cases. The abuse of prescription drugs in the United States is a major issue for many Americans who face the battle of addiction every day. There has been a rise in unintentional drug overdose deaths from the use of opioids, which are strong pain relieving drugs such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and morphine. Opioids are now abused more than any other illicit drug or controlled prescription drug (World Drug Report). It’s important to acknowledge this trend because we live in a society that is driven by prescribing these drugs for a number of diagnosed ailments (Field and Cassel, 1997; Schnoll & Weaver, 2003; Portenoy & Lesage, 1999; Breitbart, 1998; Smith, 2008).

There are significant claims and arguments made about addiction. The biggest claim addressed how abuse leads to addiction and the overall effect that has on an individual’s relationships, emotional state, and their health. There is a plethora of statistical evidence that support the following claims about drug abuse.¹ According to a 2015 report by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 52 million Americans over the age of 12 have used prescription drugs

¹ For more information on statistical evidence relating to prescription drug abuse see Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Understanding the Epidemic*. <http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/>.

non-medically in their lifetime. The data describes the abusive tendencies of these drugs, which can eventually turn into an addiction. The United States makes up 5% of the world's population and consumes 75% of the world's prescription drugs (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2015). Almost 50% of teens believe that prescription drugs are much safer than illegal street drugs (Foundation for a Drug Free World, 2015). The consumption of prescription drugs has a lot to do with the consequences that arise from taking too much medication and having dependency issues. Addiction is, fueled by prescription drugs.

In 2013, only 16% of Americans believed that the United States is making progress in its efforts to reduce prescription drug abuse (Center for Lawful Access and Abuse Deterrence). There should be more support to educate and control how drugs are being prescribed to patients in the long term (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). Heroin use rose by 75 percent between 2007 and 2011, with an 80 percent increase in first-time use among 12 to 17-year-olds since 2002, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA). Experts say the increase in heroin use is linked to prescription opioid abuse. Young people often become addicted to pain pills and progress to heroin which provides the same euphoric high when pills are hard to come by (Krans, 2014). Around 54.2% of prescription drug users get them free from a friend or relative, making it much easier for individuals to become addicts (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2015). Drug dependence and addiction is a continuous circle of spiraling chaos.

Addiction can start at the most unexpected times. Someone may start by drinking alcohol casually with friends. Eventually, they increase their alcohol intake and have an accident one night that requires medical attention. The doctor prescribes the injured patient 20mg of OxyContin to treat the pain caused by the accident that resulted from drinking too much alcohol.

The patient gets hooked on taking more than the recommended dose of the OxyContin pills and soon starts mixing alcohol with the drug. The dangerous combination puts the patient's life at risk, possibly leading to death. Lastly, once the prescription to Oxy runs out, the patient experiences withdrawals and cravings for more of the same euphoric feelings. Eventually, this could lead to the patient seeking the cheaper more dangerous opioid, heroin, for the same effect. Recovery for a prescription drug abuser can be a long and arduous road. Not only will he or she have to endure physical withdrawal, they must confront mental and emotional dependency as well (LegallyDead, 2012).

Another dimension to acknowledge when it relates to prescription drug abuse and addiction is the toll it takes on relationships of those who are addicted.² Psychology Today reports that women who are addicted to drugs are more likely than men to associate their substance abuse with their relationships. While on the other hand, men who are single, become more likely to interact in self destructive behavior when they abuse drugs. One thing leads to another, and not only do they relapse, but they also poison their relationships as well. Perhaps for women more so than men, the intersection between addiction issues and issues of intimacy may be borne from trauma suffered during childhood. In the words of TIME magazine, "the vast majority" of people who struggle with a substance abuse problem have also suffered major trauma in their past (TIME, 2012).

Interestingly, researchers writing in the Journal of Psychiatric Research claim that women who suffered from a traumatic event are more conditioned to feel fear than men, which can

² For more information about substance abuse and relationships, see Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

manifest as fears of loneliness increase they attempt to self-medicate more with drugs and alcohol. The temptation to feed a fueling drug habit to numb the pain caused by a toxic relationship is common among partners who are wallowing through the stages of addiction.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, prescription drug abuse results in a death every 19 minutes in the United States. This is particularly alarming and also threatening to the populations that are prescribed drugs every day. The main key behind reducing the number of individuals who become prescription drug addicts is to have 'prevention' be a part of the solution. The use of prescription drugs can cause a number of negative effects in one's life such as addiction, dependence, withdrawals, and death; therefore, it's important for anyone taking medication to be aware of these risks (Narconon, 2016).

How one becomes an addict

There are many different ways that someone may become addicted to prescription medication. For many individuals, it simply starts with a migraine and the prescription pills used to treat that migraine. Then, the patient becomes so used to the euphoric feeling of being sedated under the drug that they take the medication even when they don't have the migraine. Furthermore, the feeling one gets from a prescription drug is the most common reason they become addicted. "If you give [oxycodone] to an anxious person they will be less anxious." After the pain has gone away... they [may have] become accustomed to a medication that is powerfully helping their distress. Now you have the makings of someone who could be 'hooked.'" People with mental health problems such as anxiety and depression are more likely to use painkillers on a long-term basis (Forman, April 2015). The use of prescription drugs in their case causes them to escape the reality of the illness and gives a sense of relaxation.

According to addiction specialists, it's important to notice any changes in the behavior of a person who is struggling with some form of mental illness and taking prescription drugs.

According to a 2012 National Survey on Drug Use close to 8.4 million adults in the United States have both a mental and substance use disorder (National Institutes of Health, 2014). In 2009, for the first time in the U.S., drug overdose deaths outnumbered deaths due to motor vehicle crashes. Prescription drugs, especially opioid analgesics, have been increasingly involved in overdose deaths over the last decade (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

Medical emergencies resulting from prescription drug abuse increased 132 percent over the last seven years, with opioid involvement rising 183 percent (Drug Abuse Warning Network, 2013). Moreover, the economic costs of prescription drug abuse are substantial. It is estimated that the abuse of opioid analgesics results in over \$72 billion in medical costs alone each year (Coalition Against Insurance Fraud, 2014).

Prescription drug abuse is a valuable liability for the medical facilities and taxpayers. Addiction to prescription medication is higher for those who live in a household where their parents are drug addicts. Children associate behaviors with their parents as they grow up. If they see their parents abusing drugs and acting very erratically, they may not know what to do as they struggle to cope with the reality of their parent's drug addiction (Rizzo, 2014). Prescription-drug addiction can strike any parent, at any time (Dr. Ross, 2016). Signs that someone is abusing drugs include moodiness, withdrawal from the family and social interactions, excessive sleeping, forgetfulness, and neglecting responsibilities.

Abuse vs. Addiction

There is a difference between what is known as ‘prescription drug abuse’ and ‘prescription drug addiction’.

In reality, substance abuse does not majorly disrupt one’s life. There remain implications of legality and real damage to the body, mind, and spirit. Though, individuals learn from their negative consequences and eventually change their behavior. Drug addiction is more extreme than abuse. Addiction is a chronic, often relapsing brain disease. It can cause very negative consequences and compulsive drug seeking despite the harmful effects to the addicted person as well as those people around that person (WebMD, 2016). The abuse of prescription drugs can eventually lead to an addiction as dependency increases.

There are many typical scenarios that people deal with when it comes to abuse vs. addiction:

A young woman may suffer from anxiety at her workplace so she medicates with Xanax. The doctor prescribed her to take two tablets a day, one in the morning and one in the evening. In the beginning, she takes the amount that the doctor prescribed. Eventually, problems at her workplace begin to arise, so the anxiety she feels becomes heightened. The two Xanax a day is now up to four tablets a day and she begins to abuse the prescription medication. She still has the ability to make it through daily functions, though only because of the Xanax that is being abused.

A young man suffers from an automobile accident and is in recovery. During his time in the hospital a medical physician was giving him hydrocodone for the severe pain after surgery. Once he leaves the hospital there is more pain and he receives more hydrocodone. In order to remove the pain, he takes the required dose. The numb euphoric

feeling that the medication causes makes him want more of the drug. He now uses the hydrocodone to have the sense of feeling its effects rather than numbing his pain. What begins as abuse of the drug soon turns into a full-blown addiction. The young man may try getting the prescription medication from another physician or even buy it illegally when he becomes addicted.

People who misuse or abuse medication are at higher risk for serious health consequences. Data on drug-related emergency department (ED) visits in 2009 reveal that nonmedical prescription medication use accounted for 25 percent of all drug-related ED visits and more than half of ED visits for medication abuse or misuse (SAMHSA, 2011a). Moreover, an individual who has abusive tendencies takes more medication than their required dose, though continues to function normally through the day.

Why does this matter?

More people in the US died last year of drug overdoses, than those that died in car accidents, making prescription drug abuse the third leading cause of accidental death. In the last 20 years, the consumption of prescription stimulants increased from 5 million to 45 million (Clinton Foundation, 2015). The epidemic is also widespread on college campuses across the country. Popular stimulants such as Adderall and Ritalin allow students to work diligently for long hours without interruption. Though, the effects of the stimulants on the body can be detrimental if taken in excess. Most college students (90%) who used Adderall (a medication used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy) non-medically in the past year were also binge drinkers and more than half were heavy alcohol users (SAMHSA, 2009).

While some students abuse prescription medications to feel good or get high, plenty of others turn to these medications to help manage their daily lives by reducing stress and anxiety of college, boost their mood, or to stay up all night writing that important term paper.

Understanding the epidemic of prescription drugs as a society is important because there has been an increase in addiction across the nation. Being more aware and better educated is beneficial so you know the warning signs of someone who is struggling with an addiction to prescription medication. There are many warning signs to watch out for when someone may be experiencing a dependency to prescription drugs. Some of the biggest warning signs are a change in personality, social withdrawal, increased sensitivity, forgetfulness, and defensiveness (Foundation for a Drug Free World, 2016). Recognizing the signs earlier rather than later can have major impacts on how the person responds. Being supportive of the individual and encouraging treatment, but not forcing them to change is the best option. Letting them accept responsibility for their actions is a progressive step toward recovery (Help Guide, 2016).

The Increase in Addiction

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), more than 6.5 million people above the age of 11 used prescription drugs for non-medical reasons in 2013.

According to Dr. Jennifer Sauver (2013), “often when people talk about health conditions they’re talking about chronic conditions such as heart disease or diabetes, however, the second most common prescription was for antidepressants — that suggests mental health

is a huge issue and is something we should focus on. And the third most common drugs were opioids, which is a bit concerning considering their addicting nature.”³

Even with the rise in prescription medication addiction, the Food and Drug Administration continues to approve powerful medication for children as young as 11 years old. Most recently, they approved the painkiller OxyContin for those between the ages of 11 and 16. Furthermore, this puts youngsters at risk for developing an addiction to painkillers that could affect them later in life. The number of prescription painkillers sold in the USA has quadrupled since 1999, with more than 44,000 Americans dying of drug overdoses each year (CDC, 2015).

Why has there been such a dramatic increase in prescription drug abuse and addiction across the United States? Researchers tell us there is no one correct answer to this question. More importantly, there are a number of different reasons that are the result of such an increase. Though, the major problem for concern is what society teaches us about prescription drugs. It’s evident that we live in a pill nation; if you visit the doctor with a problem, they more than likely have a prescription pill for the cure; it’s alarming. Educating people about the downfalls of these drugs is one way to reduce the number of those who become addicted. There is a common misconception that prescription drugs are less dangerous than illicit illegal drugs because they are FDA approved; when in reality these drugs are just as harmful. Such misinformation, coupled with increased direct-to-consumer advertising, which may also contribute to increased demand for medications, makes effective educational programs even more vital to combating prescription drug abuse (American Journal of Public Health, 2010).

³ For more information on abuse and addiction see Mayo Clinic Drug Addiction section, 2016.

The use of prescription drugs can cause a number of negative effects in one's life such as addiction, dependence, withdrawals, and death; therefore, it's important for anyone taking medication to be aware of these risks. There are many detrimental effects to the individual's health, their relationships, and quality of life overall. In the future, there needs to be more educational outlets that inform individuals about the dangers associated with taking prescription medication. If we all work together toward eliminating this epidemic, the world will be a healthier place. Prescription drugs have positive benefits that can reduce pain, help patients through recovery, and ease certain symptoms. Though, the more important matter is those who continually abuse the drugs to the point of becoming an addict. The epidemic that has developed from prescription medication abuse needs to be evaluated and steps should be taken to educate the public in order to reduce the number of individuals that become addicts.

There were a number of specific themes that were apparent when an individual is dealing with drug addiction. The main themes deal with abuse leading to addiction, relational issues, withdrawal, relapse, and recovery. These same themes are also addressed throughout different fictional films about addiction. Abuse leads to addiction, when someone begins abusing a substance it becomes harder for them to quit. When you're addicted, you're not able to control your drug use and you may continue using the drug despite the harm it causes (Mayo Clinic, 2016). Addiction causes heartache and hardship for family members, and its effects can sometimes be passed down through generations, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Without the constant supply of the substance, addicts face the chronic pain of withdrawal.⁴ The severity and duration of withdrawal depends on the level of dependency of the substance and the type of substance being used (American Addiction Centers, 2016). For a person recovering from addiction, lapsing back to drug use indicates that treatment needs to be reinstated or adjusted or that another treatment should be tried⁵. For many people struggling with addiction, the toughest step toward recovery is deciding to make that change and realize the substance is causing problems in your life.⁶ According to research that tracks individuals in treatment over extended periods, most people who get into and remain in treatment stop using drugs, decrease their criminal activity, and improve their occupational, social, and psychological functioning (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2016). All of these themes about addiction are addressed in the narrative films and documentaries that were researched.

Fictional Films about Addiction

A number of different media outlets have shed light on the epidemic of addiction in many different ways. There are many fictional films that put addiction into different perspectives as characters' struggle and deal with the reality they face. Unlike the documentaries that were analyzed, the narrative films work with the plot of the story to show how the addiction develops, who is involved, what happens to them, and how they come to a final resolution. Documentaries use real life settings and people that are actually dealing with critical heartbreaking addictions. Fictional films use more of an artistic aspect when telling the story, while documentaries portray the present here and now of the story through interviews, firsthand accounts of addiction and their effects. Feature films about addiction accomplish the story in different ways. The films

⁴ For more information on withdrawal symptoms, reference American Addiction Centers, 2016.

⁵ For other information on relapsing from drugs, refer to McLellan, 2000.

⁶ For more information on recovery, see National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2016.

show progress of addiction through each phase of the story and how it has an effect on the characters.

There will be analysis of five features that contain some form of addiction. The following films are *Requiem for a Dream*, *Drug Store Cowboy*, *The Basketball Diaries*, *Half Nelson*, and *Leaving Las Vegas*. First, In *Requiem for a Dream* there are four central characters that struggle with their own personal forms of addiction. Set in Coney Island, the drug induced utopias and future dreams of these individuals are shattered from the result of addiction. In the film, three young people develop an addiction to heroin, while the mother of one of the heroin addicts becomes addicted to losing weight by taking amphetamines. Their drug intake initially starts with abuse, though by the end of the film they all turn into chronic drug addicts. The director Darren Aronofsky accomplishes this story by using dreamlike sequences of their drug induced imagination, the highs and lows of their addiction, and then an eventual spiral that destroys their hopes and dreams causing each character to lose their sanity.

The story is accomplished through the way addiction causes delusions and how it really makes the character's act and feel. There is also a sense of recklessness that develops during their addiction; as addicts these four characters begin to think about only the drug and nothing else in their lives. The film is about the ultimate price that one pays when they are addicted to drugs. *Requiem for a Dream* not only shows the physical changes of a person through stages of addiction, though it psychologically shows the audience how addiction creates an altered conciseness that results in hallucinations and erratic behaviors. The look of the film is very gritty, raw and on edge. There are substantially more cuts in this film than there are in a regular two-hour feature. Using the hip-hop montage style and quick cuts show a drug induced state of mind, allowing the audience to come along on the trip with the characters.

The film *Drug Store Cowboy* is a realistic road movie about a family of drug addicts that rob pharmacies to feed their drug habit as they travel across the country. The characters in this film have an appetite for prescription drugs. They aimlessly wander from hotel to drug store getting their fix and selling what they cannot use. Matt Dillon plays the leader of the drug addicted gang; leading them into every successful robbery. Together, these couples form a family that work together in order to achieve and satisfy their addiction. The whole family aspect in this film creates an intriguing story that is accomplished through a different way than other films alike. The story is not about bad people, but rather about sick people that have an addiction they cannot overcome. The film also displays how drugs can ruin relationships. The leader of the drug gang, Bob Hughes has a struggling relationship with his mother because of his addiction to prescription pills. Hughes does not care; he is only turned on by the thrill of getting drugs and the eventual payoff of getting high. The film is directed by Gus Van Sant, who has directed many iconic and memorable features. He understands a drug addict's mentality of feeling bad and needing drugs to feel good, even though these drugs are the reason why they are feeling bad in the first place. Overall, this film is an adventurous road journey involving drug addicts who rob pharmacies and drug stores for their fix of prescription pills. The characters are very believable and the story is well told in every phase.

Next, the film *The Basketball Diaries* shows addiction and the destruction through the eyes of a teenage boy. Based on a true story, *The Basketball Diaries* prove that addiction can happen to anyone, even the most unlikely character. The story revolves around 15-year old Jim Carroll, played by a young Leonardo DiCaprio. Jim's passion for the basketball court is evident in the film, also his account of teenage life in a personal diary. Eventually, peer pressures and an appetite for cocaine and heroin bring Jim down a dark path of street life, stealing, and

prostitution. They accomplish the story through real life occurrences from author Jim Carroll, and his novel which was adapted into the screenplay for *The Basketball Diaries*. The true story characteristics of addiction in this film make it astonishing and more memorable than if it was a film based entirely off of fiction. The film shows the progression of addiction for Jim, starting out as pills and cocaine, then escalating to heroin. One specific scene in the film shows the pain and torment of withdrawal symptoms on Jim as he begs for more drugs to feel normal again. His family life also suffers when the addiction take hold. Jim's mother in the film shares very similar characteristics to Edwin's mother in *American Addiction*. She is disgusted by her son's choices and the path he has decided to go down. More importantly, there are scenes in *The Basketball Diaries* that show a strained relationship between Jim and his mother, which is also the case in *American Addiction* between Edwin and Sharon. The film is about teaching a lesson to everybody; no matter who you are or what you have, addiction can destroy your life. It demonstrates that with the right help and mindset, addiction can be controlled and eliminated in one's life.

The next film is one of my personal favorites and has always been an inspiration as a filmmaker. *Half Nelson* is a low budget independent drama film about an elementary school teacher's appetite for crack cocaine. Again, the film shows that addiction can happen to anyone, even those we look up to as mentors. The 2006 film was made on a budget of \$650,000, which is comparatively low for a feature film. Ryan Gosling stars as Dan Dunne, a history teacher at a school in Brooklyn. Dan is well liked by his colleagues and students, though hides a dark secret of addiction. One of Dan's students eventually catches him getting high in the locker room after a basketball game. They form a bond with one another as Dan tries to clean up his act and his student Drey, attempts to understand his situation. The story of *Half Nelson* is accomplished

through the personal character study of Dan Dunne and his bonding friendship with one of his students. Even though Dan is a highly respected elementary school teacher, he still struggles with an addiction that nobody knows about. *Half Nelson* is a relatable story because it visualizes that even teachers are human and make mistakes too. There is a theme of recovery that is addressed toward the end of *Half Nelson*. Dan's strong bond with Drey overpowers his dependency to crack cocaine, and he moves toward a clean life. The film looks more personal than other fictional films about addiction. For instance, the camera angles, movements, and aesthetics bring the audience closer to the main character and his problem with addiction. Also, having a minimal amount of characters and focusing specifically on Dan's story of addiction makes the audience understand his issues and problems in his life.

Lastly, the film *Leaving Las Vegas* presents a different story about addiction that is not typically seen in films. The film shows a suicidal alcoholic who has left his personal and professional life to drink himself to death in Las Vegas. Though, to his surprise he ends up developing a relationship with a prostitute. Unlike other fictional films about addiction, *Leaving Las Vegas* shows a hardened alcoholic's journey through addiction and his developed romantic relationship. There are not too many films that blend addiction with romance, though it works very well in *Leaving Las Vegas*. Nicolas Cage plays Ben Sanderson, a raging alcoholic who is on a self-destructive path in Las Vegas. Similar to other films about addiction, the story is accomplished through the way addiction controls and affects the character's life, while exploring their actions that happen from the resulting addiction. The film depicts the theme of relapse, as Ben can never stay sober, as the addiction has consumed his life and body. *Leaving Las Vegas* was shot on 16mm film which gives the piece a sense of raw and rough in the aesthetics; allowing the audience to be drawn closer to the main characters. This film is about issues of

dependence and obsession; the dependence is alcohol and his obsession is the prostitute Sera that he eventually falls in love with. Furthermore, *Leaving Las Vegas* attempts to show that even in the worst of times there is someone there that cares about you and loves you for who you are.

The content among fictional feature films about addiction relies heavily on the character study of the individual and their addiction. Each story shows how addiction starts with abuse, its effects on relationships, struggle with relapsing, effects of withdrawal, and the process toward recovery. The constant themes in these films were the effects of addiction, relationship troubles, self-loathing, and dependence issues. On the contrary, documentary films about addiction contain the real life effects of an addiction, symptoms of withdrawal, personal interviews with addicts and their family, along with scientific research and evidence about the addictions. Rather than entertaining an audience, the documentaries proved to be much more informative about addiction. The action of the specific addiction is the leading issue involved with documentaries. The effects of an addiction are viewed in a non-fictional environment with real life and people. First hand accounts from the addicts and their family are the front and center issue of these documentaries. Lastly, professional addiction specialists and scientific researchers provide insight about the addictions and their trend in society.

Documentaries and Addiction

From the documentaries there was a theme of continuous addiction that related to drugs, technology, sex, and gambling.

An Australian Documentary, *Oxy: The Hidden Epidemic* explores the epidemic of the powerful pain medication OxyContin. They take a serious subject like drug addiction and put it into an educational piece that warns the viewers of this paralyzing medication. The documentary

offers insight into the issue about how doctors prescribe medication to their patients. One of the stories explained how a young man received Oxy from multiple doctors because of back pain. This documentary demonstrates a non-fictional side to addiction and establishes it as a major American problem. The documentary addresses the theme of abuse and how it eventually leads to addiction in some patients lives.

Next, *Cold Turkey* is a documentary that gets inside the heroin epidemic through a disturbing and personal way. Photojournalist Lanre Fehintola experimented with heroin while working on a book that featured drug addicts. He wanted to get the feeling of a drug addict by making his experience as realistic as possible. The documentary portrays the real life effects through both the psychological and physical difficulties that withdrawals bring when going 'cold turkey'. The significant themes presented throughout this documentary are withdrawal and symptoms of serious heroin addiction.

The documentary *Understanding Joy: The Devastation of Gambling Addiction* involves a different subject matter and form of addiction. They center the documentary on a woman named Joy who struggled with the devastating addiction. The narrator explains how the slot machines for gambling addicts are similar to a drug. For instance, it's like sitting at a slot machine hooked up to an IV morphine trip, blocking out everything else around them. Both gambling and drug addicts contain very similar impulses. This documentary deals with the relational theme of addiction and how even gambling can have negative effects on sustaining strong relationships.

On the contrary, *Porn on the Brain* looked into the addiction many teenagers and young adolescents are having from watching too much pornography. There was scientific evidence presented that showed how the brain of someone that has an addiction to drugs is similar to that of a person with porn addiction. The documentary addresses this issue through interviews,

studies, and first-hand knowledge from the narrator. Porn acts in a similar way that drugs do, addicts are so use to the visual and the highs it brings from the dopamine levels in the brain that it becomes very difficult to kick the habit. The central theme of this documentary is abuse eventually leading to an addiction. Once porn becomes a regular habit in a person's life, it can quickly turn into an addiction.

Furthermore, another tough habit to kick is an addiction to virtual video games. Dr. Phil presents a very interesting show about the problem of video game addiction. A man spends hours playing video games that ruins the relationship with his family. The virtual reality of video games stimulates the brain in the same way that drugs do. Gaming addiction also presents withdrawal symptoms that are very similar to those who have withdrawals from drugs. Being addicted to these games break families apart and they can cause mass destruction to the individual; which could lead to suicide. It demonstrates how any kind of addiction can have detrimental effects on sustaining a healthy relationship.

The documentary *Rain in my Heart* follows the lives of 4 individuals who are all battling alcohol addiction. It explains how devastating alcoholism is to both the person and their family. Again, these are very similar characteristics to someone who battles a drug addiction, there isn't much of a difference. Drug addicts may struggle from different symptoms than alcoholics, though they each present their own consequences to the health and safety of the individual. *Rain in my Heart* shows the theme of relational issues, and how alcoholism is a poison not only to the person addicted, but also their relationships.

Technology is another major issue that is easy to become addicted to. The documentary *Addicted to the Internet* addresses the problems associated with our connection to the internet and social media. It shows and describes how technology brings about a downfall if it is used too

much. In the same way that drugs effect dopamine levels in our brain, the internet and mobile phones have an addicting nature that is similar. Technology addiction can cause mild symptoms of withdrawal and anxiety similar to what drug addicts' experience.

The documentary *Cracking Up: Addiction to Crack Cocaine* is about the addiction to crack cocaine, Daniel Preston; a user of recreational drugs gets high on crack as part of an experiment about the effects of the drug. It shows how destructive this substance is and how it effects the central nervous system. This documentary addresses how easy it is to relapse on the powerful and addicting drug. They also present evidence that crack cocaine increase dopamine levels in the brain and causes subjects to crave more of that feeling.

Next, *Tobacco: Addicted to Pleasure* views this substance in two different realms. They present the long history of tobacco and what people thought were beneficial about the plant. Then, with later research it was discovered that tobacco is more harmful than once thought. The documentary establishes why tobacco is so addicting, and how it's similar to other drugs. Again, like other stimulation caused by addiction, the dopamine levels in smokers rises significantly, making them want to experience more of this feeling.

The documentary *Adult Entertainment: A Psychosocial of an American Obsession* takes an in-depth investigation into the American problem of Adult Entertainment obsession. Two men subjects were tracked about their indulgence in porn and adult material for 60 days. It was discovered that both single and married men have very similar tendencies when viewing adult entertainment. This documentary addresses the theme of relationships. Porn can have significant negative effects on relationships if used too frequently. The connection to pornographic addiction shows effects on the brain and release of dopamine the same way illicit drug use does.

Moreover, *The Meth Epidemic* a PBS Frontline Production is extremely eye opening in getting an idea of how devastating crystal meth is to the user. It exposes the conflict between the drug addicts and law enforcement in the Portland, Oregon area. This documentary shows the theme of effects that result from an addiction to crystal meth. There are many physical and emotion effects the user experiences. The piece also discusses the very high potency that turns meth users into mentally erratic individuals.

The documentary *Painkillers: Numbing the Pain* shows the process of making opium and how it is developed into heroin and morphine. They illustrate the way the brain responds when attacked by painkillers. The themes in this documentary include withdrawal effects, relational issues, and relapsing. It's an important source because it gives me an understanding of other effects that painkillers have on a healthy brain.

Furthermore, *Inhalant Abuse: Breath Easy* explains how the younger generation is getting hooked on inhalants. There are enormous consequences that arise including permanent brain damage and harm to vital organs. The major theme in the documentary is abuse leading to addiction and the devastating effects that inhaling chemicals can have on an individual. The environmental factors are the biggest contributor of whether someone will develop an addiction to inhalants.

In documentary *Marijuana: A Second Class Addiction* there is a discussion about the addictive qualities that marijuana contains. They dismiss speculations that this psychoactive substance is non-addictive and bring in first-hand accounts of people who struggled through quitting marijuana. Unlike other harder drug addictions, being addicted to marijuana has side effects that are less harmful to the user.

Many of the documentaries that were researched deal with drugs, though the unique piece *Pure Science Specials – Women addicted to Sex*, they depict the lives of four sex addicts and their ways of coping with an addiction to sex. All of their addictions contain different urges and elements that someone who is diagnosed with sex addiction goes through. The documentary was interesting toward the topic of addiction, which goes to show you can be an addict without a substance.

A popular beverage that is enjoyed by many Americans can also have some addictive qualities. *The Coffee Addiction* explores America's obsession to coffee and the effects of caffeine on those who drink it. They highlight coffee's history from its beginnings to where the market is today. Caffeine is the most popular legal drug in America, and it can present withdrawal symptoms that are less severe than other substances.

The documentary *Gambling: It's not about money* takes firsthand testimonials from a group of people recovering from gambling addiction. It presents different evidence than the previous annotation about gambling. With gambling addiction also comes the potential to abuse and or become addicted to alcohol and other drugs. The central theme of the documentary is how abusive nature eventually leads to an addiction. In some cases, gambling can be more addictive than drugs.

The perfection of body image is another obsession that people can become addiction to. In the documentary *Body Image for Boys*, it explains the idealized male physique that is being portrayed in movies, on TV, and in magazines. Rapidly growing populations of men are becoming obsessed/addicted with their appearance. They explore the issue and struggle of young men in today's world of perfection with appearance.

Lastly, the documentary *Pills: Never Enough* illustrates America's addiction to pharmaceutical drugs and nutraceuticals that are helping people slow down the aging process. They also highlight drugs like OxyContin, Xanax, and other prescription medications that are being used at "pharming parties", where young people consume several different types of pills just for fun. It deals with the theme of abuse leading to dependency and addiction. Furthermore, the third section of the documentary goes into the abuse of erectile dysfunction drugs like Viagra, which is being used by many older men and also a value to the porn industry.

What This Project Accomplished

The narrative digital video project *American Addiction*, addressed some specific themes that are consistently viewed in other fictional films. This work seeks to create a fiction narrative that explores and illustrates main concepts and themes previously identified.

First, the project visualizes the effects of a character that is under the influence and addicted to prescription medication, such as those individuals from the documentaries. The main effects being portrayed in *American Addiction* are withdrawals from not having a continuous supply of OxyContin, and the reverse effect of having too much OxyContin and overdosing, which is a real concern among many patients and addicts. In addition, the project also illustrates how being addicted to drugs can ruin relationships of friends and family. There were multiple accounts in both the fictional films and documentaries where drugs had a detrimental effect on not just the person addicted to the substance, but also those that are closet to them. Being addicted to drugs has toxic effects on everyone involved with the person that is addicted. In the project, Edwin has a distant and broken relationship with his mother Sharon and he breaks up with his girlfriend Maggie because he is addicted to the OxyContin.

The film illustrates the process of trying to overcome and beat an addiction. The montage scene toward the end of the project shows the transition of 30 days of rehab and the effect it has on the character. During this month, there is a struggle to remain clean and also dreams and hallucinations of wanting to take drugs again. This is visually captured through many short shots edited in succession. The final scene of the film also leaves a lasting impression about addicts; even though they have cleaned up their life for the time being, the thought of going back to their old lifestyle haunts them every day.

Through the digital video project *American Addiction* there are many different themes that are recognized from the effects of an addiction. The themes are similar to those discovered in the literature and narrative/documentary films. The themes included in *American Addiction* are substance abuse, relationship issues, withdrawal, dependency, and the eventual recovery. The script for the project was written to incorporate the main themes of addiction and how they affect not only the individual dealing with the addiction but also their friends and family.

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Public Television. Documentary.

Video Game Addiction. Presented by, Dr. Phil McGraw. CBS Network. 2013. Television show.

Atlas Studios

PRESENTS

A Ben J. Hamele Production

AMERICAN ADDICTION

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University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

About:

American Addiction (Feature)

An Atlas Studios Production

Total runtime: 62 minutes

Estimated rating: **R** (violence, language, drug use)

Budget: \$1,500

American Addiction

"I was in the depths of addiction, weathered and torn, doing whatever I could to get my next fix."

- **Edwin**

AMERICAN ADDICTION is a feature digital video project about the dangers of prescription drug abuse and the toll it takes on the individual, their family/friends, and life in general. The film stars Jake Konrath as Edwin Galloway – a young 20 something year old struggling with a life of addiction. Edwin's addiction to prescription medication like OxyContin and Xanax has isolated him from everyday society. His formed bond between the drugs and his dealer Felix Robinson is the only connection Edwin has. Edwin lost everything good in his life, as he's down a path of total destruction. After his drug dealer Felix Robinson dies one night of a heroin overdose, Edwin begins to head down the path toward recovery. Edwin becomes addicted to the powerful painkiller OxyContin from surgery after a car accident. He was so used to the feeling of numbing his pain after surgery, that he continued to use the prescription medication long after.

Edwin aims to clean up his life by traveling to a rehab center in another city, where Edwin's mother also resides. His longtime friend Barry (Matt Meverden) drives him to "Harmony Oaks" to get help with the addiction to prescription medication. The relationship between Edwin and his mother Sharon has been very distant over the years. He attempts to patch up their relationship while also struggling to overcome his addictions. Will Edwin's drug use be more important than the relationship with his mother? Is Edwin going to relapse once he enters the rehab facility? Do Edwin and his mother Sharon rebuild their relations and prevail in the end? This is the story of AMERICAN ADDICTION.

"That was the last time I seen Felix alive, he died of a heroin overdose that night. It made me realize I needed to change."

- **Edwin**

About the film and the characters

The central themes of the film include drug abuse, withdrawals, relationship issues, relapses, and the obstacle toward recovery. The story of *American Addiction* follows Edwin, a young man in his mid-20s as he battles an addiction to prescription medication. It shows how addiction can take a toll on an individual physically, mentally, and emotionally.

After thinking about the scenes in the project and how they come together through Edwin's ups and downs, my audience will consist of people who have dealt with the highs and lows of an addiction, mostly young male adults between the ages of 25 – 45 years old. The audience for this piece is going to be male because the raw gritty nature of the story appeals more to males than it would to females. On the other hand, males are more susceptible to prescription drug addiction, so it would relate more appropriately to them as a whole. The main importance of this project is seen in the story and how it transforms through character development, emotional appeals, and the visual composition of the piece.

The feature is presented in a narrative format. It is essential to develop a particular shooting technique and style to tell a story that is meaningful and matters to society. The varying relationships in this project attempt to make the audience respond to their emotions they are feeling on screen, which provides an overall connection. This can be related to the field of communication because the main character (Edwin) in the story is trying to communicate his problems of addiction in order to get help and clean his life up. There are also a number of

different characters throughout *American Addiction* that come in to contact with Edwin. For instance, during the opening scenes Edwin is associated with his drug dealer Felix. Their relationship is presented in a strange way as the dialog they exchange only revolves around Edwin getting more prescription drugs and Felix supplying him. This goes to show that their relationship specifically revolves around business and nothing else.

Next, Edwin gets help from his longtime friend Barry who drives him to the next city that has an excellent rehab facility called Harmony Oaks. Barry is one of Edwin's only friends that he has left, most of them disowned him once he began using and abusing drugs. Though, Barry sees something in Edwin; he is the true friend that everybody tries to find in life. He reunites with his mother Sharon, though she is disgusted with him because he has not seen her in two years and Sharon only thinks Edwin wants money to fuel his drug habit that she suspects. In addition, Edwin meets Lisa one morning after a drug binge in the city alleyway. Their first time meeting one another is awkward and a little odd for both of them. Eventually, they cross paths again once Edwin enters rehab and Lisa is the leading counselor of the program. Edwin tells Lisa that he became addicted to Oxycodone after an accident that required surgery. Edwin had no prior problems with addiction before his surgery, and following the prescription to Oxycodone that soon changed; he was getting a fix anywhere he could. The main difference to understand is that addiction results in tendencies which are not normal. For instance, in order to supply their habit, a person addicted to prescription medication may steal the drug, purchase it illegally, or get prescribed by multiple doctors. Furthermore, their relationship builds as they begin to trust one another and Lisa listens to his situation of addiction and failed relations with his mother.

Finally, the combination of getting help with his addiction through a rehab program and caring about the relationship with his mother brings Edwin and Sharon together. The digital project will look as realistic as possible, to show the subject matter of addiction and how it can be threatening to the individual and everyone associated with them. The story aspect of *American Addiction* is important to engage the audience through emotions, striking visuals, and the use of sound or music in the composition.

American Addiction opens with Edwin in a state of withdrawal, from not having his continued dose of prescription medication. The visual shots during this scene will be handheld, gritty, and fast corresponding to Edwin's state of mind. This opening will show the condition the main character is in and also what his intentions are as the story moves forward. During the early scenes, the audience will be able to sense that Edwin is nearing rock bottom with his addiction. He is either going to overdose on drugs from his addiction or he will realize that he needs to reach out for help and get clean. After purchasing more prescription medication from his drug dealer Felix, Edwin later finds out that Felix dies of a heroin overdose that night. *American Addiction* gradually shows the transitions of addiction. For instance, the beginning starts with the acknowledgment that he has a problem with addiction, then his process to build the relationship with his mother and get help, brief relapses along the way, and finally his mission to get sober and stay sober.

The screenplay of *American Addiction* is organized in a way that the first half is dark in mood and tempo, while the second half is brighter in both aesthetics and mood. This shows how the main character is transitioning through his addiction, which is also a normal state of mind every addict goes through. First, there is a period of denial; these are dark times for the individual because they believe everyone else is crazy but them. Next, you relapse more and see

yourself at the lowest possible point. Finally, something within you is triggered and you know you can't get any worse, so seeking help can be the only option for an addict. These areas are visualized in the script and on the storyboard for the project. The gradual changes of Edwin are shown through different moods of lighting, intensity of music, physical attributes, as well as his emotional state of mind. The goal of this project is to portray the realistic effects prescription drugs have on an individual and make it a warning for those who believe it could never happen to them.

American Addiction is a redemption story in the eyes of the main character Edwin Galloway. Edwin sets out to prove that he can beat an addiction and also save the relationship with his mother who has lost faith in him. Scenes are lit differently for mood and tempo of this piece. During Edwin's dark negative times in his life, mood lighting is utilized to emphasize dark areas more prominently. When Edwin is going through change by having positive influences the scenes include brighter lighting. Creating an environment around pacing in the storytelling and aesthetics through visuals, lighting, and sound will allow for the achievement of the specific look that this piece represents. The specific way the piece feels can draw many different emotions from the audience. My goal throughout *American Addiction* is to bring about emotion and get a reaction from my audience from scene to scene. In order to accomplish this, the screenplay and production of the film should be told in the most logical manner. There is a form of connection when the audience can experience emotions for a character through a compelling story.

Making the feature digital video project *American Addiction* matters by giving insight into this topic through a fictional story that shows how the effects of addiction hampers one's life and relationships. A unique relationship develops between Edwin and his rehab counselor Lisa.

At first, Edwin doesn't care for her as they meet in an unusual way. Though, eventually her knowledge and interest in Edwin brings him closer to Lisa and their relationship grows.

American Addiction explores the obstacles that an individual goes through when struggling with an addiction, their acknowledgement of the problem, and the way they go about overcoming this obstacle.

The project is presented in a narrative format because the creativity involved with telling a fictional story is endless. A documentary limits some of the more experimental shooting and directing that can be done with a narrative. Also, shooting in a narrative format allows the actors to perform in a way they feel best supports their character, while also having the peace of mind to know the content being portrayed is fictional. If this research was presented in a documentary format, there would be more of a central focus on one main real-life individual and what the resulting addiction has done to their life; similar to the television show *Intervention*. There are scenes in *American Addiction* that the audience with less knowledge about addiction may not understand. For example, after the scene between Edwin and his mother Sharon, he goes to the club to indulge in booze and drugs to forget about all of the hardships in his life. Edwin aimed to clean his life up and enter rehab, though the temptation of doing drugs and feeding his addiction is more overpowering. The sheer creativeness of this one take shot through the club displays Edwin's state of mind after the altercation with his mother. Instead of feeling down about himself at this current juncture, he medicates to pretend everything in his life is perfect. Though, eventually Edwin gets caught snorting Oxy in the bathroom and he gets physically thrown out of the club. This changes his mood from relaxed to manic depressive as he overdoses in the alleyway that night. Choosing to present this story as a narrative gives the piece a specific

identity that experiments with the mood and tempo of the film, allowing it to explore areas that other formats would ultimately restrict.

The principal photography for *American Addiction* started in November and wrapped up by the end of February. The project is edited on Adobe Premiere Pro, color correction on Adobe SpeedGrade, and sound correction in Adobe Audition. After the project is completely finished it will be entered into several small niche film festivals. For instance, there are festivals that market to only films with a specific subject matter. In particular, the Reel Recovery Film Festival is an event that celebrates films, the arts, writing, and creativity. They showcase filmmakers who make honest films about addiction, alcoholism, behavioral disorders, treatment and recovery. This festival would give me a great opportunity to show *American Addiction*. By entering festivals that cater to a certain category of filmmaking, it narrows down the competition from other popular large film festivals. In addition, the film will also be entered into festivals around Wisconsin such as The Central Wisconsin Film Festival, The Wisconsin Film Festival, and The Green Bay Film Festival.

American Addiction shooting schedule/times

Scene

1. INT. APARTMENT FACILITY > EXT. STREET > INT. REHAB FACILITY - AFTERNOON... (LONG TAKE)

Talent: Jake Konrath, Mika Heilikova

Shooting dates/times: February 19, 2016 3:00pm - 5:00pm

2. INT. VEHICLE (MOVING) - THAT MOMENT

Talent: Jake Konrath - Ending scene

Shooting dates/times: February 19, 2016 1:00pm - 2:00pm

3. EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - THAT MOMENT, INT. BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

Talent: Jake Konrath, Mika Heilikova, Suzan Kurry.

Shooting dates/times: February 23, 2016 5:30pm - 9:00pm

4. EXT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

INT. Rock and Roll Cafe

Coffee shop scene.

Talent: Jake Konrath, Mika Heilikova

Shooting dates/times: January 26, 2016 5:30pm-7:30pm

5. EXT. REHABILITATION CLINIC - MORNING

Establishing shot, no talent.

INT. REHABILITATION CLINIC

Talent: Jake Konrath, Mika Heilikova.

INT. REHAB CLINIC ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Talent: available extras to play addicts.

Shooting dates/times: December 12, 2015 12:00pm-4:00pm

6. EXT. STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT

EXT. ALLEYWAY

Talent: Inclusion of a Flashback scene as Edwin's drug induced state brings back visions. Nighttime scene, need use of three-point lighting kit.

Talent: Jake Konrath

Shooting dates/times: December 4, 2015 5:00pm-7:00pm

7. EXT. ALLEYWAY - MORNING

Talent: First scene that Edwin and Lisa meet, unaware that Lisa is the counselor he will later meet at rehab.

Talent: Jake Konrath, Mika Heilikova.

Shooting dates/times: December 12, 2015 10:00am-11:30am

8. EXT. HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

EXT. FRONT DOOR/HOUSE

INT. BATHROOM

INT. KITCHEN

EXT. HOUSE

Talent: Jake Konrath, Suzan Kurry

Shooting dates/times: November 12, 2015 5:00pm-10:00pm

9. EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

-This is another establishing shot to set scene and location of the wide open road.

INT. CHEVY (MOVING)

Talent: Jake Konrath, Matt Meverden

Shooting dates/times: November 14, 2015 10:00am-2:00pm

10. INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (Opening scene)

Talent: Jake Konrath

Shooting dates/times: December 10, 2015 6:00pm-730pm

11. INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Talent: Jake Konrath, Alex Friedemann

Shooting dates/times: December 3, 2015 5:30pm-8:30pm

12. EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSED: 1 WEEK LATER

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Talent: Jake Konrath, Matt Meverden

Shooting dates/times: November 14, 2015 10:00am-2:00pm

13. INT. HOUSE - MORNING - FLASHBACK BREAKUP SCENE

Talent: Jake Konrath, Erin Foth

Shooting dates/times: February 25, 2016 6:00 - 9:00pm

14. INT. Nightclub - Night

Talent: Jake Konrath, Marty Ryan

Nightclub/fight scene (LONG TAKE)

Shooting dates/times: February 25, 2016 11:00pm - 1:00am

Shot list for American Addiction

A film by: Ben J. Hamele

1. INT. HOUSE FADE IN - PUSH SLOWLY IN ON DOOR HANDLE.CUT-IN-BEDROOM (MS) Edwin goes through withdrawals as he lies in bed.
2. INT. HOUSE (MS) - (CU) Have multiple medium shot and close-ups.
3. INT. HOUSE (MS) Handheld shot of Edwin frantically searching for drugs.
4. EXT. HOUSE (LS) SHOT of house from street.
5. EXT. HOUSE/FRONT DOOR (OTS)(MS) Man pounding on front door.
6. INT. HOUSE (OTS)(MS) Edwin talking to Felix from the EXT.
7. EXT. HOUSE (OS) Felix goes off-screen for a moment.
8. EXT. HOUSE (CU) Felix handing a small bag of pills.
9. EXT. HOUSE (OTS) Edwin takes out some cash.
10. EXT.>INT. HOUSE (OTS) Felix and Edwin talking to one another.
11. EXT. HOUSE (CU) Edwin has a pleading look.
12. INT. HOUSE (MS) Felix explaining things to Edwin.
13. INT. HOUSE (CU) Felix thinks to himself.
14. EXT. HOUSE (MS-LS) Felix and Edwin head toward his car.

FADES TO BLACK gradually.

MUSIC BEGINS: SUPERIMPOSED OVER BLACK: AMERICAN ADDICTION

A FILM BY: BEN J. HAMELE

15. EXT. COUNTRY ROAD (LS) Down the road as far as the eye can see.
16. EXT. COUNTRY ROAD (MS) A black Chevy SWIPES in front of the SCREEN.
17. INT. CHEVY(MOVING) (MS-CU) Two men, Barry and Edwin. Barry drives.
18. INT. CHEVY (CU) Multiple CU of back and forth convo.
19. INT. CHEVY (CU) HOLD on Edwin's expression.
20. EXT. CITY STREETS (LS) Barry pulling Chevy over.

21. INT. CHEVY(PARKED) (MS) Edwin exiting the vehicle
22. INT. CHEVY(PARKED) (MS) Edwin reaches in and grabs his things.
23. INT. CHEVY(PARKED) (CU) Edwin and Barry shake hands.
24. INT. CHEVY(PARKED) (MS) Edwin takes out a twenty dollar bill.
25. INT. CHEVY(PARKED) (MS) Between Edwin and Barry.
26. EXT. CHEVY/STREET (MS) Edwin shuts the car door, steps onto the sidewalk.
27. EXT. CHEVY/STREET (CU) Edwin pulls out a cigarette from his coat pocket.
28. EXT. CHEVY/STREET (MS) Barry begins to take off; then stops.
29. EXT. CHEVY (MS) SHOT of Barry in the car.
30. EXT. CHEVY (CU) Edwin with a cigarette parched out of his mouth.
31. EXT. STREET (MS) Barry drives away, Edwin lights the cigarette.
32. EXT. HOUSE (LS) Establishing shot of an older house.
33. EXT. HOUSE (OTS) Camera follows Edwin as he walks up to the front door.
34. EXT. HOUSE (MS) Edwin gives a few knocks on the door.
35. EXT. HOUSE (OTS) The door slowly opens to a middle aged woman. Edwin's mom.
36. EXT. HOUSE (MS) Sharon lets Edwin in the house.
37. INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN CAMERA FOLLOWS Edwin and Sharon walk into the kitchen.
38. INT. KITCHEN (MS) Edwin puts his luggage on the table.
39. INT. KITCHEN (CU) Sharon takes two mugs from the cupboard.
40. INT. KITCHEN (MS) Sharon puts coffee grounds in the coffee maker and turns it on.
41. INT. KITCHEN (CU) Shots between Edwin and Sharon's conversation.

42. INT. HOUSE/BATHROOM (MS) Static shot of Edwin entering bathroom.
43. INT. BATHROOM (CU) Edwin taking bottle of pills out.
44. INT. BATHROOM (CU) Edwin popping the pills, swallowing.
45. INT. BATHROOM (MS) Edwin stares into the mirror. Blinks his eyes and shakes his head around.
46. INT. KITCHEN (M-TWO) Two-shot of Edwin returning, Sharon sips coffee back to counter.
47. INT. KITCHEN (CU) Close-up shots between Edwin and Sharon's conversation.
48. INT. KITCHEN (M-TWO) Two-shot as Sharon tells Edwin to leave.
49. INT. HOUSE (CAMERA FOLLOW) Follows Edwin and Sharon through house.
50. EXT. HOUSE (MS) Edwin bursts out the front door.
51. EXT. HOUSE (CU) Sharon yelling at Edwin walking away.
52. EXT. SIDEWALK/APARTMENT (MS) Edwin walks down a sidewalk.
53. EXT. APARTMENT (MS) Edwin enters the apartment.
54. INT. APARTMENT (CAMERA FOLLOW) Edwin down hallway.
55. INT. APARTMENT (MS) Edwin stops at a door, see's paper on door.
56. INT. APARTMENT (MS) Edwin takes it off the door.
57. INT. APARTMENT (CU) Edwin reads the paper. Close-up of the paper.
58. INT. APARTMENT (MS) Edwin puts the paper back on the door.
59. INT. APARTMENT (MS) A man comes walking toward Edwin.
60. INT. APARTMENT (M-Two) Two-shot of the man and Edwin.
61. INT. APARTMENT (M-Two) The man walks out of FRAME.
62. INT. APARTMENT (CU) Edwin's expression.
63. EXT. STREET (LS) Edwin sips a small bottle of booze, walks the street.

64. EXT. STREET/ALLEYWAY (MS) Camera follows Edwin into a dark alleyway.

65. EXT. ALLEYWAY (MS) Edwin stops and throws bags down, sits on the ground.

66. EXT. ALLEYWAY (CU) Edwin drinks, pops pills.

67. EXT. ALLEYWAY (EXCU) Edwin drinks more, puts down more pills, starts freaking out.

SLOWLY FADES TO BLACK:

FADES IN:

68. EXT. ALLEYWAY (MS) Static shot, Edwin still passed out the next morning.

69. EXT. ALLEYWAY (OS) We hear a young ladies voice.

70. EXT. ALLEYWAY (MS) Lady comes into FRAME toward Edwin.

71. EXT. ALLEYWAY (CU) She reaches down, touches Edwin. He makes subtle movements. He finally opens his eyes.

72. EXT. ALLEYWAY (MS) The lady grabbing the bottle of booze.

73. EXT. ALLEYWAY (M-Two) Two-shot of Edwin getting up from the ground, picking up his luggage.

74. EXT. ALLEYWAY (CAMERA FOLLOW) Follow each character in a two-shot as they continue their conversation.

75. EXT. ALLEYWAY (CU) Edwin stops in his tracks, looks at lady. "HEY LOOK LADY..."

76. EXT. ALLEYWAY (MS) Edwin walking away, she stands still.

77. INT. BATHROOM (CU) Edwin searching his bag.

78. INT. BATHROOM (CU) Bottle of pills.

79. INT. BATHROOM (MS) Edwin pouring the pills in the toilet.

80. EXT. REHAB CLINIC (LS) Establishing shot from road.

81. INT. REHAB CLINIC (MS-FOLLOW) Camera follows Edwin into clinic and through hallway.

82. INT. REHAB ROOM (LS) Rehab counselor talks to a group of addicts.

83. INT. REHAB ROOM (MS) Counselor walks in front of the room.
84. INT. REHAB ROOM (MS) Edwin entering the room.
85. INT. REHAB ROOM (MS) Edwin's POV of everyone in the room turning around to see Edwin.
86. INT. REHAB ROOM (MS) The counselor welcomes Edwin.
87. INT. REHAB ROOM (CU) Edwin has an embarrassed look and he turns his head away.
88. INT. REHAB ROOM (LS) Edwin takes a seat, the counselor continues talking to the group.
89. INT. REHAB ROOM (MS) The counselor talks to the group.
90. INT. REHAB ROOM (MS) SHOT of Edwin listening. The counselor looks at him, calls on him.
91. INT. REHAB ROOM (MS) The counselor looking at Edwin.
92. INT. REHAB ROOM (CU) Edwin tilts his head up a little shy.
93. INT. REHAB ROOM (CU) Counselor agreeing.
94. INT. REHAB ROOM (MS-PAN) Edwin explaining to the group.
95. INT. REHAB ROOM (MS) SHOT of the counselor thanking Edwin.
96. INT. REHAB CLINIC (MS) Edwin gathering his things.
97. INT. REHAB CLINIC (M-TWO) TWO-SHOT Lisa and Edwin.
98. INT. REHAB CLINIC (CU) Edwin curious, showing interest.
99. INT. REHAB CLINIC (CU) Lisa paying attention.
100. INT. REHAB CLINIC (M-TWO) TWO-SHOT FOLLOW Lisa and Edwin.
101. EXT. COFFEE SHOP (ESTABLISH) An Establishing shot.
102. INT. COFFEE SHOP (M-TWO) TWO-SHOT of Lisa and Edwin at the booth.
103. INT. COFFEE SHOP (CU) Close-up of Lisa and Edwin.
104. INT. COFFEE SHOP (MS) Medium shot of their conversation.
105. INT. COFFEE SHOP (OTS) Over-the-shoulder SHOT of each character.

106. INT. COFFEE SHOP (MS-PUSH-IN) Medium shot, then PUSH into their handshake on DOLLY.
107. EXT. HOUSE (LS) Edwin and Lisa stand in front of the house.
108. EXT. HOUSE (CAMERA FOLLOW) FOLLOW Edwin and Lisa to front door.
109. EXT. HOUSE (MS) Sharon opens the door.
110. EXT. HOUSE (MS-CU) Move into close-ups of conversation.
111. EXT. HOUSE (CU) Sharon is hesitant. Let's them in.
112. INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN (Static shot) They all sit around a table.
113. INT. BATHROOM (MS) Edwin pours the pills in a toilet.
114. INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN (MS-CU) Sharon, Edwin, and Lisa in conversation.
115. INT. KITCHEN (CU) Edwin stares up at Sharon, HOLD.
116. INT. KITCHEN (CU) Sharon thinking.
117. INT. KITCHEN (MS) Edwin flies up from his seat.
118. INT. KITCHEN (M-TWO) Sharon and Edwin hugging.
119. SUPERIMPOSED OVER BLACK: ONE MONTH LATER
120. INT. BUILDING/HALLWAY (CAMERA FOLLOW) Edwin and Lisa walk down a hallway.
121. INT. HALLWAY (M-TWO) Lisa puts her hand out and Edwin shakes it.
122. INT. HALLWAY (MS) Lisa starts walking away, Edwin stands looking.
123. INT. HALLWAY (MS-LS) Lisa turns back around and agrees, then continues walking.
124. INT. HALLWAY (MS) Edwin smiles, turns the other way and walks out of FRAME.
125. EXT. ROAD (LS) A vehicle hauls ass down the road.
126. INT. VEHICLE (CU) Edwin is behind the wheel.

127. INT. VEHICLE (CU) Edwin reaches for the glove compartment.
Takes out a small bottle of prescription meds. He looks at it.

FADE TO BLACK: THE END OF SHOT LIST: AMERICAN ADDICTION - ROLL CREDITS