

SCREAMING AT GOD

written by

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FADE IN:

Smoke from a cigarette rises from the bottom of the screen.

NARRATOR
I started young.

INSERT PICTURE BOX LOWER RIGHT.

Man and woman with a little boy.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
I was three. I had asked my dad to
try his cigarette. He knew it would
make me sick. I am sure he thought
I would never ask again.

An overweight man in his late 20s hands the child a
cigarette, Boy smokes, coughs, and chokes.

FADE PICTURE BOX LOWER LEFT. FADE IN PICTURE BOX UPPER RIGHT.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Then there was Tracy.

Insert a picture of a cute 16-year-old.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
When I was five we went to the
store and bought a pack of
cigarettes for her. She was my
first babysitter. I said my mom had
sent me in and she was in the car.
I would have done anything for
Tracy. We sat under the bushes in
my backyard and smoked all day
long.

The child is looking lovingly at his babysitter under the
bushes while smoking cigarettes.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
I didn't get sick this time. More
importantly. This is when I started
smoking. Every summer.

Picture boxes circle from upper left to bottom left. Fading
in then out of different babysitters.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Different babysitters Same
scenario. Till I was 13.
(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Stealing from my parents or just
buying them.

Bottom center picture of a teenage boy. Smoking.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

At 13 I started smoking full-time.
I think, I know, I was the first in
my group to do it.

Mid-center picture of a high school boy smoking with friends
in 1970s clothes.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It continued through high school.

Upper picture of college kids all smoking.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It continued through college.

Insert a picture of a wedding. Everyone smoking.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Of course, I married a woman who
smoked. Everyone smoked. That was
what we did. One of the things we
did.

Show a church picnic.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

I remember hearing a pastor once
saying that at 20 you were cool if
you smoked. At 40 you were cool if
you didn't. I became a parent in my
20s. I swore that I was not going
to let my kids smoke when they
asked me. They did ask. I didn't.

Family, man, wife, two children.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Life happens.

Individual pictures on the screen of Grandfather,
Grandmother, Father, Mother, Man, Wife, Children.

Fade out, Grandfather.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

My Grandfather died of a stroke. He
smoked.

Fade out, Grandmother.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
My Grandmother died of Lung Cancer.
In fact, both my grandmothers died
of lung cancer. But I never knew
one of them. She died before I was
born.

Fade out, Father.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
My father died mysteriously.

Morph mother from woman to cancer patient in bed to casket.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Then my mother was diagnosed with
cancer. She smoked up to 3 packs a
day till she was told it was
terminal. She quit that day. Not
soon enough. Like my grandmother.
She never knew her grandchildren.

Fade all pictures. Smoke is still rising on the black screen.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Divorce happens and I was alone. No
parents, no family, only
cigarettes. Which I now hated with
a vengeance. I tried everything.

1 INT. BATHROOM - AFTERNOON 1

A hand putting a patch on an arm.

NARRATOR
I tried patches.

A man lights up a cigarette in a doorway.

2 INT. CAR - DAY 2

A hand opens a pack of gum and puts a piece in his mouth.

NARRATOR
I tried Gum.

Pan to the cigarette in an ashtray.

3 INT. DOCTORS OFFICE - DAY 3

A doctor writes a prescription and handed to a person on the table.

NARRATOR
I tried prescriptions.

4 EXT. HOUSE - DAY 4

An ambulance drives into a driveway.

NARRATOR
Turns out I was allergic to the medicine and almost died from anaphylactic shock. Think that would be enough?

Back of a man walking out of hospital and lighting up a cigarette.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Nope.

5 INT. LARGE ROOM - NIGHT 5

Many people are laying on the floor on mats. One person is walking around.

NARRATOR
I tried hypnotism. That worked for about 3 days. I thought I was over it, and I lit a cigarette for my wife. I wasn't over it yet. It never worked again.

6 INT. DOCTORS OFFICE - DAY 6

Hand with needles sticking in it.

NARRATOR
Acupuncture and acupressure. Same results.

Cigarette lighting. The person takes a drag.

BACK TO BLACK SCREEN WITH SMOKE.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

So when you have tried everything.
You sometimes go to the impossible.
The invisible. I went to God.

Reading the bible the book of James 5:16 "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

7

INT. PASTORS OFFICE - DAY

7

Two men are sitting. ART is seen from the back and is familiar. The other PASTOR DAN is in a white shirt, black dress pants, and a tie. Short black curly hair.

PASTOR

What can I do for you today Art?

ART is a man in his early 40s, blonde turning to gray hair. About 200 pounds and 5'11.

ART

I have had a problem that I have had since I was a kid. I don't know if you know this but I smoke.

PASTOR

Art everyone knows you smoke. You can smell a smoker even before they enter a room.

ART

I have tried everything to quit and I was reading my Bible last week, and it said that if I confess my sins to the church and have them pray for me so that I may be healed.

PASTOR

Art smoking isn't actually listed as a sin, and I don't think this is something that we have to bring up to the whole church, but if you're having difficulty quitting we can do something at the next worship night.

(MORE)

PASTOR (CONT'D)

I know you have been going since your divorce but since it's on the last Wednesday of the month we won't be having one in November because of Thanksgiving or December because of Christmas. Are you okay with waiting?

Art looks sad, he really wanted a quick fix.

ART

No, that's fine. I was hoping for something sooner but I understand. I really didn't want to bring this in front of the whole church anyway. It's a little embarrassing.

They continue to talk as the scene fades out.

FADE IN:

8

INT. WORSHIP HALL - NIGHT

8

Art is sitting on the house's right side about the fourth row back. Everyone is sitting and singing. Pastor walks up from behind.

PASTOR

Art is time. Are you ready?

NARRATOR

(SCREAMS)

NO!!!

ART

(Looks up at Pastor)

Um, Sure, I guess.

NARRATOR

I was hoping he had forgotten.

Art rises and follows the pastor on the stage. He stands off to the side but the Pastor motions him to the center.

PASTOR

Ladies and Gentlemen Art has a challenge that he would like our help with. As some of you know he is a smoker and even though smoking is not in the Bible he was hoping that we would pray with him to help to stop smoking for good.

Pastor leans over to Art

PASTOR (CONT'D)
When did you want to quit?

ART
I guess on the first?

PASTOR
Okay so let us Pray. Lord, we ask
in your precious name that Art has
the power according to your will to
overcome the addiction he is
facing. We ask that on the 1st of
February, he is freed in the power
of your name. Amen.

EVERYONE
AMEN!

The scene fades as everyone is hugging Art and he is talking
and shaking people's hands.

9 INT. ARTS BED ROOM - MORNING 9

Title "Next week"

Waking up and looking at the pack of cigarettes on his bed
Art stands and sighs. Grabbing a cigarette he lights it up.

ART
Darn, I really thought that was
going to work. I really expected a
miracle of some sort.

10 EXT. CHURCH - DAY 10

Walking out Art runs into NANCY a woman about 30 with blonde
hair.

NANCY
Art how is the smoking going?

ART
Not well. I really expected a
miracle but I am still smoking.

NANCY
I have a secret. I have not told
anyone.

Art looks at her.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I have been a smoker since I was in high school but I couldn't pray for you and continue to smoke so I had to give it up while I am praying for you. I only smoke a couple times a week but it will be nice to finally give it up.

ART

I don't know what to say. Thank you I guess. I hope I am able to quit soon also.

11 EXT. CHURCH - DAY

11

Outside the next week.

BILL a man in his late 20s walks up to Art.

BILL

Hey, Art can I talk to you?

ART

Sure, Bill.

BILL

I just wanted to see how it was going with the smoking.

ART

The smoking is going great. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to give it up yet though.

BILL

I don't smoke very often but I have every time I have a beer. I have felt bad about smoking while I was praying for you so I have quit while I am praying for you.

ART

That's great. I guess. I hope I am able to quit soon.

BILL

I believe you will. I know there are a bunch of us praying for you.

ART

Thanks.

12 INT. CHURCH - DAY

12

Next Week.

A very cute brunette named JANET catches Art as he walks down the hall.

JANET

Hey, Art can we talk?

ART

Sure Janet what's up?

JANET

I wanted to ask you why you did what you did last month.

ART

What do you mean?

JANET

Why you had us pray for you?

ART

Because I have been trying to quit for a while and I haven't been able to on my own.

JANET

I know no one knows this about me. Even my husband and children don't but when I am stressed and overwhelmed I go out to a secret stash I have in the garage and smoke a couple of cigarettes. I have wanted to stop and I know it isn't the right thing to do But since you ask us to pray for you I haven't been able to do it.

ART

Do what? Pray or smoke?

JANET

Smoke. I just couldn't continue to smoke and pray for you to stop.

ART

Wow, thank you. I don't know what to say. Um, I haven't quit. I am trying but I am still smoking.

JANET

Just know we are praying for you. I have to tell you since I have stopped I really haven't even been stressed out enough to want to. In fact Friday I threw the last few I had away. I don't think I'll need them again.

ART

Thanks for sharing that with me.

JANET

I'd appreciate it if you'd keep it a secret.

ART

Your secret is safe with me.

13 INT. CHURCH - MORNING

13

Next week.

Art walks up to the soundboard. DOUG is behind the board. DOUG is a good old boy about 5'11, 220, with brown curly hair.

ART

Hey Doug can I ask you a question?

DOUG

Sure, What's up?

ART

Does everyone in this church smoke?

DOUG

Yeah, I think they use to. I know there are a lot of people praying for you. How's it going?

ART

Not good. I've had a lot of people tell me they have quit but I'm still smoking.

DOUG

Don't worry. You'll quit. One way or another.

Art gives him a worried look. He knows what he means.

Title "Five Months Later"

About 30 people are having a cookout at the beach. Kids are playing. There is a group of teen youth around a fire with a young man playing guitar.

Art is standing by the grill and is approached by NEIL. NEIL is about 63 with salt and pepper hair. Very strong features and a pot-marked face. Think Wes Studi

NEIL

Art can we take a walk? I have something I'd like to talk to you about.

ART

When one of the deacons wants to take a walk and talk to you should go.

They both turn and walk down the beach. They walk without saying a word for about 400 yards. Art is looking more and more concerned.

NEIL

You know Art I have been a Christian for a very long time.

(Pause)

I was 13 when I gave my life to the Lord.

(Pause)

I have given Him everything. My life, my family, my business. There was only one thing I kept to myself. Only one thing. One guilty pleasure.

Art is quietly taking all this in.

NEIL (CONT'D)

So I have to ask you. Why did you do what you did last February? I mean I could not continue to keep praying for you while I still smoked. It was the last thing I had to give to him. But I have. I have quit so I could pray for you.

Neil turns and looks at Art.

ART

I don't have an answer for you. I don't know why I did it. I thought I was supposed to. If it helps it hasn't worked.

NEIL

We are going to keep praying till it does.

Art and Neil turn to walk down the beach. Art is getting redder and redder. You can tell he is getting angry. He splits off about 100 yards from everyone and walks towards the parking lot.

15

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

15

Art starts the car and slowly leaves the parking lot. Until he gets to the street Then HE LOSES it. Roaring out of the lot.

ART

ARE YOU FREAKING KIDDING ME, GOD!
WHAT AM I SOME KIND OF TEFLON-
COATED SUPER BALL WHERE PRAYER
BOUNCES OFF OF ME AND HITS EVERYONE
AROUND ME? NEVER STICKING TO ME?

(Runs through a stop sign
cars honk)

YOU PROMISED A MIRACLE. I EXPECTED
A MIRACLE. THERE WAS NO FREAKING
MIRACLE!!!

(At a stop sign now. Art
is beating his steering
wheel. The car beside him
makes a quick left Woman
in the car is scared.)

I MADE A COMPLETE FOOL OF MYSELF.
GO IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH YOU SAID.
HAVE THEM PRAY FOR YOU. YOU SAID.
YOU WILL BE HEALED YOU SAID. WELL,
I AM NOT HEALED. I AM STILL
SMOKING. AND THERE WAS NO MIRACLE!
WE REALLY HAVE TO DEFINE WHAT A
MIRACLE IS!

Art comes to a stop at a red light and catches his breath. He is deep breathing and tears are running down his cheeks.

ART (CONT'D)

There was no Miracle.

He continues breathing.

NARRATOR

Are you done yet?

ART

You said there would be a miracle.
There was no miracle.

NARRATOR

What did you expect me to do?
Remove all the cigarettes in the
world? Could you imagine the
traffic on Monday if I had done
that? This would be a pretty ticked-
off world.

Art smiles thinking about it.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Let's talk about a miracle if you
want. Do you think you are the only
one who wanted to stop smoking?

ART

No.

NARRATOR

Do you think you were the only one
that read that passage in James
about going before the church?

ART

I don't know. I guess not.

NARRATOR

But you ARE the only one who did
it. And because of you, an entire
church was healed. Dozens more than
you even know have been praying for
you and while they were at it found
the strength to quit themselves.
Something they had been praying
for, for years. Now, I don't know
how you would define a miracle but
I've shown you how I do. It's a man
who would put himself out there for
me, and besides Art, they did one
thing you have never done.

Art looks up to heaven.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
They stopped smoking... They just
never lit up another one.

FADE TO BLACK.

16 DISSOLVE INTO A BLACK SCREEN WITH SMOKE. 16

The smoke stops and you follow it up the screen.

NARRATOR
That was 1998.
(pause)
I have yet to light another one.
(pause)
Then one day a voice said,
(Pause)
Have you ever thought about writing
a movie?

17 INT. CLOSE UP - DAY 17

Art opens his eyes and stares at the 4th wall.

FADE TO BLACK