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*Flight* and *Drugged: High on Alcohol* a Comparison

The dramatic film, *Flight* and the television documentary, *Drugged: High on Alcohol* both look at alcoholism and its destructiveness. Whip and Ryan struggle with addiction in very different ways. Whip is charming, and, at least in regards to his profession, capable. His drinking has destroyed his personal life; he is divorced with a child and to some degree left him alone as far as close relationships. While Ryan’s drinking has crippled him mentally and physically to the point of not being able to function at all. But, he has a family that, while at times is enabling, cares for him and tries as best they can to help.

*Flight* uses the dramatic backdrop of a plane crash that Whip, a talented pilot, makes the best of, and its repercussions that make Whip face his addiction. In the end he is unable to pull out of the dive his life has taken. On the way to a hearing on the crash, where all he must do to absolve himself is essentially show up sober, he gets completely blotto. A visit from his drug dealer is arranged by his handlers from the pilot’s union, in order to get him back on his feet with a bit of cocaine, and it looks as though he will get through it. But in a dramatic turn, he instead confesses. Faced with pinning the consumption of two missing mini-vodka bottles on his lover who dies in the crash he finally admits to drinking and to himself, his addiction.

*Drugged: High on Alcohol* ends with Ryan finally getting a thorough medical exam to find the extent of damage his drinking has done to his body, with the hopes he will find his way into treatment. He and his family get the bad news that his injured hip has experienced bone die-off and many of his internal organs are failing as a result of his drinking. His health has come to the point where his life is at risk whether he stops drinking or not. During a psychiatric evaluation his additional fears, that he may have inherited his father’s schizophrenia, are assuaged and he agrees to enter treatment. Unfortunately it is too late for Ryan. He passes away while in treatment.

In the last minutes of *Flight,* the audience finds Whip in prison, leading what looks to be a 12 step group. He finds redemption in his fellow prisoners. He is sober and regards himself for the first-time, free. In the last scene, during a surprise visitation, Whip’s son touchingly starts to interview his father for a school essay to be called “The Most Fascinating Person that I’ve Never Met.” He asks Whip, “So, who are you?” To which Whip responds, “That’s a good question.” Ryan, at on point, also admits to his mom “Who am I? I couldn’t tell ya.” We get the sense Whip is going start on the road towards answering that question. But Ryan, on the other hand, will never get to realize this journey.

In *Flight,* the audience is shown there is hope, while *Drugged: High on Alcohol* is a stark look a person in the last throws of addiction. One shows us there can be light while the other scares away form the dark.