

## Alcoholics Anomalous

**(Anomalous:** *adj deviating from a general rule, method or analogy: abnormal*)

“Hi, my name is Melvin and I’m an alcoholic.”

“Hi, Melvin.”

“Well I’ve been coming here for three or four years as you know and I’ve been completely sober for two, and I hope you folks will let me share this morning even though I haven’t been here for awhile. I originally came to this group because of your name, the “Nooners.” I thought I had hit the jackpot...I could get sober and get laid at the same place. One stop shopping. You can imagine my disappointment when I found out your name was for when you met.

“Anyway, I am always amazed at the crap that we talk about, what led to our alcoholic behavior, our families who we fucked over, our deep descent into oblivion, deception, lying, losing jobs, wives and friends blah, blah, blah. At first it seemed like the same old shit over and over. Most of the time, you all let me just sit here and take notes. I don’t talk much, so I’m grateful that you are willing to hear me out today because I’m kind of down and having a real hard time lately.

“I’m thinking I never want to go to another meeting here ever again, and I’ll tell you why.

“Like I said, at first I thought we were basically all the same, telling different variations of the same story but after I began to take notes I found out that we aren’t all alike after all. What I’m about to say isn’t found in the Big Book or any of the other Anomalous literature and believe me, you all have helped me figure this out. Yeah, yeah, I know. You probably think I’m full of shit, and maybe I am, but hear me out. If I’m wrong, just tell me to stuff it up my transverse colon and I won’t ever mention it again.

“Remember when I came for my first meeting? I was as drunk as the fucking worms at the bottom of the tequila bottles. Well, I kept coming to meetings once in awhile and drank my ass off in between. I was a *Repeat Offender* repeatedly. I knew what I was so that was the first AA type I recognized. One evening after drinking about a gallon of real expensive

cognac, that's all I drank in those days, I was sitting in a bar completely blitzed and this woman walks in with a guy on her arm. I recognized her immediately. We had an affair for around six months when we were both married but we broke up eventually. As she walked past me sitting on the bar stool, I said, "Hey, I remember you." She looked up at me and said, "Yeah, I remember you too and so does my husband here," and she walked away. Later that evening she came back and sat down next to me. She said that I looked like warmed over hippo shit, her exact words, and I needed to do something before my liver exploded. Then she gave me a little kiss on the cheek and went back to her dumb ass husband. I went home with a jug, looked at myself in the mirror, and the next day I came here to my first meeting.

"I just could never get past the white poker chip that's given to someone that slips and then promises 24 hours of sobriety. I drank and came to meetings and took a white chip. Then the next day I would drink myself into a stupor, sleep it off, stagger to a meeting and take another white chip. I wound up with a whole desk drawer full of white chips. Finally, at the end of a meeting when all the chips are given out for sobriety milestones, one of you old timers, Gladys I think, asked me to cough up my white chips because you ran out of them and you told me that I was being really selfish being a Repeat Offender and all and keeping those chips and maybe I should change my alcoholic evil ways and only slip every 30 days from now on so I could start hoarding silver chips instead and they would have some white ones again. I thought that was really funny. Remember Gladys? I laughed my ass off and it really pissed you off because you were so sincere. In fact it was the first and almost the last funny thing that has ever happened in this group.

Well, shit, I thought, I can stop for thirty days if I know I can drink myself into a parallel universe after that. So every thirty days like clockwork, I would show up here sober as a Mormon monk, collect my silver chip and tell my thirty day story. How tough it was. How bad I felt. How disturbing my bowel movements were. God help me, I had migrated to a brand new category, the *Whiner*. Basically, the Whiner is entry level sobriety. Everyone whines when they start. Gladys, you were great, and God bless you. I was making progress on account of you. You became my role model. I tried to out whine you every thirty days but I now know that was fucking impossible. I would say 'pardon my French,' but even though you never cuss, you gave me the most important advice anyone has ever given me in AA. You told me to say 'fuck' more often. No, shit, Gladys, you are the

best fucking Whiner I have ever heard even though you have some real competition here.

“We have more Whiners in this group than the Bush cabinet has fascists. What happens at every meeting here could be called One Whinesmanship. One asshole whines, then the next one whines more or longer. We wine about how fucked up we are and how we fucked people over and how hard it was and still is even if our last drink was in 1946. You can always spot a Whiner. They say, ‘I’m Farnsworth’ in their normal voice but when they go into their whiney story their voices go up around an octave and a half and their larynx transposes itself upward into their nasal passages. At the end when they say, ‘Thanks for letting me share’ their tonsils retreat from their nose and they talk normally again.

“The other thing about us Whiners is how amazingly boring we are. Non-whiners get this glazed look on their faces when one of us starts to share our drivel. In fact my own eyes are glazing over right now as I’m telling you guys this shit. Notice how high my voice is and where it’s coming from. I’m not mostly a Whiner now, thanks to you Gladys and the rest of you whiny fuckers, but notice how low my voice is now that I tell you about the third group I discovered...and, believe me, you can’t avoid noticing them. I call them the *Belligerents*.

“Even after four years they still scare the shit out of me. Look at Jake over there. He is a typical Belligerent. Look at the way he’s looking at me. If he had a chainsaw, my dick would be sitting on this table here without the rest of my body attached to it. Belligerents hate Whiners. You Belligerents basically tell everyone that you are the worst fucking alcoholics anywhere and you will kick anybody’s ass that disputes it. Remember when Jake told us that he was, is and will always be more insanelly useless than anyone in this fucking room? Now, now, Jake...sit down...I know you fucked up more people and fucked them over the worst of anybody. I really don’t want you to punch me in the face like you did after my second meeting. I still have a small scar on my nose from that. Oh, oh. Sorry, Fred, I didn’t mean to short change you. I forgot just how you stole your grandmother’s Van Gogh and pawned it for ten bucks so’s you could get a six pack. You are the worst. Hell, just let me get done here; you Belligerent fuckers are all the most fucked up of anybody so shut the fuck up and sit down.

“In fact, I should interrupt myself right now. You, Gladys, are a healer. I didn’t know it at the time I started taking notes at these meetings, but the real died in the wool Whiners, the old timer Whiners, the ‘I’m a fucking Whiner and don’t you forget it,’ the ‘I’m the best Whiner you will ever meet’ Whiners really help heal drunks. New Whiners are just fucking boring, but you twenty year Whiners are fucking witch doctors when it comes to drunks. Confirmed lifetime Whiners are kind of like Belligerents as a matter of fact even though you can’t stand each other. You Belligerents can be healers too. You, Jake, are one amazing fucking healer as a matter of fact. Oh, shit. For God’s sake, Jake, sit the fuck down. I’m not dissin’ you. I’ll explain later.

“For a long time I thought that the Repeat Offenders, Whiners and Belligerents were all there were but boy was I wrong. Remember Wayne? He was a *Sharing Enhancer*. Wayne was in loooooove. In love with his alcoholic past. At first I thought he was a run of the mill Whiner like me, but then I realized how animated he got when he talked about his past benders. Whiners never get animated. Wayne’s arms would start waving like an insane Italian with spit coming spraying out of the corners of his mouth like he had rabies or something. Once I figured him out, I would watch the transformation from Whiner to Romantic with anticipation and finally deep affection. You all know how the Big Book preaches moving on, letting go your past and so on. Wayne was so fucking proud of his past it was pretty clear that he couldn’t move on if he wanted to. When he stopped being terrified of the Belligerents who all loved his stories too, he was like a runaway horse. Each episode got more and more embellished and lurid as he went on. I looked forward to him coming to our meetings if for no other reason than he was a good interlude between the fucking whining. The reason I don’t call this AA type the Liar’s Club is that you never knew if there might be some truth in Wayne’s story du jour. When he actually brought Punjab into a meeting we were all impressed. His story the previous week about getting blitzed with a huge Arab with a turban that thought he was Daddy Warbuck’s bodyguard in Little Orphan Annie seemed a little far fetched. When this eight foot shit faced Middle Eastern guy dressed in, sure enough, bloomers, a turban and a huge scimitar stuck in his waist band...the whole room emptied. We couldn’t get away from that crazy fucker fast enough. There was no ‘Hey, ‘Punjab’ or ‘thanks for sharing, Punjab’ shit that night.

“My favorite Wayne story, though, was his alien abduction. Remember how he said he was in some stupor down by the river when he looked up and

saw a bright light? He said a huge saucer hovered above the river, a door opened and it looked like someone was falling out. The person bounced a few times and landed right next to Wayne. Wayne looked at this guy, big vertical shaped eyes, silver suit, no hair, big head, funny mouth without lips. Wayne said, "Hey, want a drink?" Now that's funny. Wayne was completely stoned so either this was all in his head or he didn't see anything unusual about an alien falling out of a flying saucer and he wanted to be hospitable. Wayne said that the alien opened his mouth and apparently beamed some thoughts to Wayne's cerebral cortex with the volume turned way up. It almost blew out all of Wayne's synaptic links.

"It turned out that this guy's name was Glormph. Apparently he was a chronic drunk from the Andromeda Galaxy and he was completely fucked up when they kicked him off the space ship so he had a hard time controlling the strength of his telepathy. After Glormph could see Wayne rolling all over the ground holding his head, he managed to bring down his mental transmitter to acceptable levels. He said he had got hold of some liquid gluons in the store room and drank a considerable quantity before he got ousted. It seems the Andromeda Galaxy equivalent of AA had tried everything on Glormph but to no avail and they just couldn't fucking stand the guy. They had heard about Gladys and wanted to see if Glormph could beat her in a fair Whiner fight so they kicked him out near Wayne. Apparently there were a lot of Flonix Notes, the Andromedan currency, bet on the outcome according to Wayne. I was really looking forward to the contest, and I would have bet the farm that Gladys would have kicked that alien's ass big time....but Wayne said he was going back to Andromeda with his drinking buddy, Glormph. Whether he did or not I can't tell, but he never showed up here again. I really miss him. With work, he would have made a great Sit Down Comic which I'll tell you about shortly.

"I had never encountered a *Romantic* before I came to AA. Romantics make their alcoholic past seem so attractive that you almost think that you should be petitioning the Vatican to canonize them before they die. Or else they make you wonder if they are crazier than a fucking loon for giving up such a wonderful habit. Romantics are dangerous. They convince most recovering alcoholics that drinking is one of the seven beatitudes.

Hummeray was an immigrant from India, a pure Romantic but a lousy speller. When she decided to come to AA she had her name changed legally. She said she hated her name, Fanny. I couldn't see why that was such a bad name until I found out her last name was Pak. She said that her

reason for changing it, though, was because it symbolized to her being drunk all the time. To celebrate her newfound sobriety she decided to name herself after the French writer, Honore de Balzac. Unfortunately when it came time to fill out the form at the court house, she forgot to bring Old Goriot with her and besides she had a snoot full. I rather liked the misspelling and I have subsequently discovered that many Romantics change their names because...well, because they are so fucking romantic.

Her tales of paramours while drunk were the kind of stories that Rogers and Hammerstein would have killed for. I confess I had the hots for Hummeray for a long time, but she looked at me as if I had contracted Ebola. One incident I particularly liked was when she met a fellow Romantic named Vern. They met in the Ambassador Club, TWA's executive waiting room in Miami. They both got shit faced even before getting on board. She was in first class so he upgraded. Before they were halfway to Halifax, Nova Scotia they became members of the Mile High Club in the first class bathroom. Since he had had a lot to drink it took a very long time for him to finish what he started in that tiny room, door locked with all this noise, bumping sounds, considerable moanings and groanings. When they finally emerged, shit eating grins on both their faces, there were about forty passengers holding their groins standing in line, cursing at the top of their lungs.

“Of course if you are a Romantic, each event has to top the previous one, so there were submarines, hot air balloons, spelunking episodes and an attempt to get on an Everest climb. It all came to an end when they tried to sneak into a Space Shuttle a week before launch time. I don't know how they got past the guards, but I think Vern had a Top Secret clearance since he was a cryptographic expert. They were discovered humping like gerbils in the cargo compartment on one of the mirror arrays of the Hubble Telescope that was going to be launched soon. They found five bottles of Jack Daniels strewn all over the place. The judge sentenced them to lifetime AA meetings in separate cities or else do time together in solitary for two years in San Quentin to get their romantic shit out of their systems. Alas, the romance dwindled as the Romantics, she in Calcutta, he in Bayonne, New Jersey, began their separate but Anomalous journey to sobriety.

“One day Edwin, a *Duck Billed Platitide*, came in. Duckbills are masters of the cliché and pious-er than thou. At one time I thought of calling them the Sincere-a-holics, but I couldn't see the difference without a score card. They pepper their sharing stories with terms like ‘One day at a time.’ ‘Live

in the moment.’ ‘Let it go.’ ‘I owe it all to my AA friends who support me.’ Anyone can be a Whiner, but you really have to study the Big Book and memorize all the fucking literature to be a genuine Duck Billed Platitude. Reading sports writers helps because they use more clichés than any other profession save only politicians. ‘One game at a time.’ ‘I owe it all to my linemen who block for me.’ See? Duck Billed Platitudes and sports writers are interchangeable parts. The syntax is identical. Only the nouns are different.

“One of my favorite platitudes is “We must be entirely honest with somebody.” When she got out of the hospital, Lucille told us the story how she decided that the ‘somebody’ she would be honest with was her husband, Hank. Lucille was not very smart, but she was a dedicated Duck Billed Platitude. Hank knew all about Step 5 already, being a recovering alcoholic himself, but she insisted in reciting the whole fucking thing from memory which probably pissed him off to begin with. Then, taking a deep breath, she proceeded to tell him how she had fucked around fifty guys during her first year of sobriety and had three unforgettable nights with a fine looking horse named Rover. Unfortunately Hank was sober at the time and their thirty six year marriage was definitely over. Her bruises eventually went away and a little plastic surgery fixed her nose, but she left the Duck Billed Platitudes and the Nooners forever. Last time I talked to Lucille she said had joined a group called “The Wackers” consisting only of Mafia Belligerents. No, Jake, I’m not going to tell you where it is. You’ll have to ask Lucille about that.

“For those of you that haven’t figured it out yet, the true Duck Billed Platitude is one pathetic human being. Speaking of sincerity, Edwin was so fucking sincere tears welled up in our eyes every time he shared a story with us. The pained facial expressions were awesome. He writhed on his seat while narrating in a monotone, wringing his hands, bobbing up and down like an Orthodox Jew in a daven frenzy. In some cultures people would get on their knees and start salaaming to this kind of guy thinking he was inhabited by demons. Edwin told us about how his best friends used to be drunks and interesting but now they are all ex-drunks and incurable Whiners. He said he searched for meetings even when he was on business trips and after I thought that over I’m pretty sure he did that because then he could avoid telling the same story over and over to our group and be labeled a Whiner, and of course there are only so many clichés available even in our literature. Eventually he declined into chronic Repeat Offender status and turned all his new friends into sullen, solitary alcoholic zombies.

I've come to the conclusion that the Duck Billed Platitute should be avoided at all costs. They are a danger to society. The emperor Nero was one according to Tacitus, the Roman historian, and look what he did to Rome.

"I'd been coming to meetings regularly for over a year when I met my first *Sponsor from Hell*. You know, I'm not sure I'm smart enough to spot a good sponsor from a bad one, and there are some really good ones right here in this room like Malcolm there, but when Axel approached me after a meeting....well you remember what happened. Since he isn't here any more, I can tell you the real story. He started calling me at home. Then at work. When I can't sleep, I sometimes get up and read and I would see him across the street under the lamp light just waiting. It was kind of spooky and I asked him to stop it. Then I visited my mom in Vermont for Thanksgiving. Mom lives two thousand fucking miles from here for God's sake. She handed me the phone in the front room and said, "It's for you. A man named Axel wants to speak to you." That was as close to taking a drink as I have come since I got sober. I'm real sorry I caused a ruckus after the meeting when I came back from Mom's house, and I know it took five of you to pull me off of Axel, but he just couldn't help trying to sponsor the shit out of me and I finally couldn't take it any more. I'm glad he didn't sue AA like he said and I'm sorry about his dental bills we had to pay for, but I hear that his eyesight is coming back to normal, so that's good.

"I had a hard time getting a sponsor after that but I finally found one I liked from an AA group over at Green's Liquor Store. They meet in the storage room upstairs pretty much surrounded by acres of cognac which is pretty funny to begin with. Whiners don't tend to join this group and Belligerents become Repeat Offenders after one meeting. One Belligerent hid in a closet until Green's closed at midnight and managed to get through a gargantuan amount of cognac. He was found the next morning when they opened the place up, vomit all over the walls, the ceilings, the stairs and all over the cash registers. We had to cough up around four hundred bucks to Mr. Green to let us continue to use his fine place for meetings and we were fumigating puke smells for a month. The meetings are actually fun most of the time. They are the *Sit Down Comics* and you come into one of their meetings as one of the other AA types at your peril.

"I hope nobody here takes offense at this, but you guys aren't exactly very funny most of the time. I mean you think that 'funny' is some anecdote

involving molesting small animals as a teenager because you drank a quart of Drano every day. The guys at Green's seem to be pretty secure people. They know they were fucked up, but probably not as fucked up as some and more fucked up than others....but they look at life as a series of things that happen that are sometimes amusing. Ralph...who became my sponsor... says that they probably use this strategy so that they will never, ever stray into the arena of the Duck Billed Platitudes. They don't give a shit about the Steps usually, he says. In some ways they come to meetings because this is their audience. Ralph tells about this drunk that used to tell the same story everywhere about how he passed out cold at a High Mass at the railing just as he was about to receive Holy Communion from the visiting Cardinal himself but he eventually figured out that the story didn't go over real big at wedding receptions and funerals. It got rave reviews at Green's, though, so he kept coming to meetings and got sober as long as the members would laugh at his drunk stories.

"I first heard Ralph talk right after I came out of the asylum that the judge made me go to after I stopped traffic on Interstate 85 by lying down and taking a nap in the HOV lane. I love Ralph, and I would give anything to be like him. Even before he told me, I could tell immediately that he was a former Whiner. Gladys' advice to me evidently carries over as a general rule when Whiners moved on to higher levels of sobriety. I can't do him justice but this is more or less what he said when he raised his hand to share.

During my best drinking days, I was in a bar in Billings, Montana. Believe it or not, a bear came staggering in and sat down, demanding a drink.

"We do not serve beer to bears in Billings bars," the bartender said.

This infuriated the bear. He banged his paw on the bar and again demanded a beer.

"We do not serve beer to belligerent bears in Billings bars," the bartender said.

The bear roared disapproval and said, "If you don't give me a beer I'm going to eat that lady down at the end of the bar."

"We do not serve beer to belligerent, bully bears in Billings bars," the bartender said calmly.

True to his word, the bear went down to the end of the bar and ate the lady, came back and again roared for a beer.

“We do not serve beer to belligerent, bully bears in Billings bars who are on drugs,” the bartender said.

“I’m NOT ON DRUGS,” the bear roared.

“You are now,” the bartender said calmly. “That was a bar bitch you ate.”

‘Thanks for listening.’

‘Thanks for sharing, Ralph.’

“The whole room stood up applauding and whistling.

“So I started to go the Green’s Liquor Store meetings a lot. One night around midnight, hands folded and looking real sober this lady came in. Ralph was chairing the meeting that night and opened with his lack of interest in any of the twelve steps that have to do with “higher powers.” He said that what he does is he doesn’t fucking drink and he comes to fucking meetings. He said also that if he were inclined to acknowledging a higher power, his choice would be the Hindi god Shiva because she had eight arms with eight soft hands to give him the hand job of a lifetime. Everybody laughed their asses off except the lady. She raised her hand as soon as the laughter died down.

“I’ll call her Thelma Aquinas. She started out by saying that she followed the Big Book and worked the steps and meditated every day and had a religious experience and had been transformed because of that and Ralph was not doing it right. She said that he wasn’t honest. She said he violated Step 6, chapter 3, verse 9.1 of the Big Book and so on. Ralph let her talk for awhile. He was a disgrace to the founders of AA, she said. They knew what had to be done, and Ralph must be one of those congenitally dishonest people that the founders talked about and blah, blah, blah for ten minutes. Then she folded her hands again looking very self righteous, lips pursed, glaring at Ralph.

“The rest of the group looked at Ralph to see how he would handle this. The Sit Down Comic reputation was on the line. There was a long silence

before he took a deep swig of water, looked at her and said, “You look like you have really soft hands, Thelma, thanks for sharing.”

“Later, Ralph told me that she was a pure *Step-ologist*, one of the AA theologians. Big Book dogma is their name and holier-than-thou is their game. He said that they were even more annoying than the Whiners or Duck Bill Platitudes.

“Sitting in that Green’s Liquor Store meeting room so often reminded me of my drinking days when I was young. No Mogen David shit for me. My preference was Courvoisier Napoleon, \$75 a fifth. Eventually I drank around three or four of these every day and started buying the liter and three quarter economy size. I was an *Only Good Booze-er*. I am surprised I have not met more of these alcoholics, but I guess it makes sense. You have to have a lot of money to be a Good Booze-er and generally the money doesn’t last if you can metabolize alcohol like I can. In those days I would not be caught dead drinking Mogen David. I actually started coming to meetings after the bank foreclosed on my house, I lost my job and my wife ran off with Hank. At that time I was really fucked up. At first my sharing consisted of stories about what a high class drunk I was. Several members who never had money in their lives confided to me later on that it was too bad that these weren’t Biblical times so they could stone me to death according to some justification in Leviticus. They felt that Mogen David was just fine by them and one night they confronted me in an alleyway after a meeting. Fortunately they weren’t big fuckers like Hank, so it didn’t get out of hand, but I stopped bragging about how exclusive my booze preference was. I had come precariously close to becoming a Romantic with these stories. If that had happened for any other reason than getting laid by Hummeray, I would have killed myself. Unfortunately, I transmogrified into the even more dismal wasteland of the *Sanctimonium*.

”I started to give stirring sermons on the evils of alcohol to anyone that stood still. Ralph says that these people are probably the most obnoxious people on the planet and are personally responsible for most wars and thank God I wasn’t a Sanctimonium when I met him. He was a Belligerent then and he might have murdered me, he said. I have come to an understanding that I was insane and dangerous. Friends said that I had wild look as if I was walking around with a concealed weapon in case my victim wouldn’t listen to me. Gladys said I should go to the costume shop and get a white robe, let my beard grow and carry two big stone tablets around with me, the 12 Steps on the right, 12 Traditions on the left. It’s true. I began stopping

people in the Supermarket aisles who were buying wine. I'd say things like, "Woe be unto ye..." and "Have you talked to your Higher Power as you understand Him lately" and stuff like that. More than once, the security guard asked me to leave the supermarket premises. I started mixing up the Bible and the Big Book like they were interchangeable parts. If someone said I wasn't working the Steps hard enough I might counter with a "Physician, heal thyself" or a "May he without sin cast the first stone." I subsequently found out from Ralph that the stone quote was a mistake. He once said he watched a Repeat Offender who had come in to a meeting with a snoot full, and cold cocked a Sanctimonium with a brick. The Sit Down Comics all fell on the floor laughing.

"On the other hand, if I saw someone dozing during a meeting, I would collar them later and ask them if they had worked the Higher Power Steps recently. I think I was both a Sanctimonium and a Duck Billed Platitute at the same time, surely a persona made for murder.

"Jake, bless your malevolent fucking heart, got me after a meeting one day when he couldn't stand my pious looks and religious bullshit any more.

"I remember what you said to me too. You said that I was more fucked up than even you were which is a pretty impossible thing for any Belligerent to say. You said that you met people like me before and that I mistakenly thought my passionate beliefs were equivalent to truth. You said that being really religious and telling everyone that the Steps 2,3,11 and 12 would save their alcoholic ass just pissed off a lot of people. You said that if AA was based on sacrificing chickens, there would be feathers and blood all over the fucking room at the end of every meeting because of me.

"Then you said that trying to force everyone to convert to my belief so that sooner or later that they too would be saved or become sober or somehow better...well, that was kind of like saying that if you hang out with pregnant people you will eventually become pregnant.

"I began to look up to the heavens with one of my very best pious looks. You could see that I wasn't getting your message. But then you said something that really got my attention and was mostly responsible for me getting unsaved and on to something less fucked up. This is where your healing power came in. You put one gigantic hand around my windpipe as I recall, and said, 'Just because I'm six five and weigh 250 pounds shouldn't make any difference to your personal approach to sobriety. But if you don't

stop being such a sanctimonious asshole I am going to rip your fucking head off and shove it up your ass.’ That’s when I started going over to Green’s Liquor Store on a regular basis.

“This was a tough time for me with or without help from you, Jake. I was going through a messy divorce and a cubic cubit of Courvoisier Napoleon seemed like a good way to get through it. But Ralph sat me down and explained that this was a really good opportunity make a smooth transition to an upstanding Sit Down Comic by seeing the humor in it. I was having a really hard time seeing humor in anything, but after hearing a few other *Divorce Mongers* tell their stories I had to agree with him. After all, this was my third divorce. I ought to be pretty good at it by now.

“At the time I was practicing the seventh and eighth Steps, making a list of people I had fucked over and trying to figure how to make amends to them. Jorge was one Divorce Monger I really admired. He had gone through six wives and seemed really proud to be working on his seventh. He told me that when he tried to make amends, his favorite amended wife told him to go fuck himself. He said that in his old drinking days he would have yelled at her or fucked her but for sure he wouldn’t have calmly explained to her the difficulty of that anatomically improbable activity. Jorge said that at first it sent her into an apoplectic rage, jumping up and down and all but then she began to laugh and finally she gave him a big kiss and made him a banana smoothie. They’ve been friends ever since. His wife said that he had never made her laugh before and it really turned her on so she jumped his bones. Instead of a huge fight, he got his ashes hauled. This incident convinced him that he should be a Sit Down Comic. That’s how I met him at Green’s Liquor Store.

“So while I was amending my ass off, it turned out to not be all that bad. My second wife ran off with Hank and I never saw her again so that was easy. Instead, Lucille and I had a good riddance dinner together one night and are good friends now. When she said she would introduce me to Rover, I knew she was on her way to Sit Down Comic status, and by the way, for what it’s worth, I got my ashes hauled that night too. My third wife was a nice person it turns out, so I didn’t have a hard time telling her I was sorry for all the shit I ladled on her plate. She’s happily married now and told me that I had been such an asshole that I made her wonder why she always picked such fucking losers. So she amended my amending by thanking me for her own enlightenment.

But then I came to my first wife who I called Jaws. I finally decided, and Gladys and Jake, I'm sure you can understand this, I just fucking can't apologize or make amends to someone that bites when she gives head. I was always so drunk, I never found out the damage until I sobered up. Do you have any idea how it looks to the guy standing next to you while you're taking a leak in a restaurant men's room urinal with Band-Aids all over your dick? I've still got a little scar on....well, you guys don't need to hear all the details. Suffice it to say that I don't give a good flying fuck what the Big Book says about amending everyone. Jaws can do her surgical magic on some other poor fucker.

"So there you have it. I guess while I've been sharing this stuff with you I've made up my mind. There are 12 Steps and 12 Traditions in Alcoholics Anomalous and it turns out, I just counted, that there are 12 AA types I described. Also, there are 12 months in a year and we all know there are 12 beers in a case. Coincidence? I think not.

"I'm getting the fuck out of here and am going to Green's from now on and I encourage each of you except the Whiners and Belligerents to join me if you ever find your lost sense of humor. One thing I have to thank you Whiners for, though. I sure use "fuck" a lot more than when I came in here and while that isn't ever mentioned in the Big Book or any other Anomalous literature, that's the first real Step to sobriety. Thanks again, Gladys.

Well, I gotta go now...I've got a heavy date with Hummeray later tonight. After she came to Green's one night, she saw that I had cleaned my self up, you know, haircut, shaving, taking a shower, all that cosmetic shit, and listened to my 'enlightenment by Jake the healer' story. She laughed her ass off and I'll be fucked if she didn't hit on me later after she told a knee slapper about her last hump session with Vern in the night cell before the trial, in plain sight of around a hundred people across the aisle in the drunk tank who were whistling and hooting encouragement.

"Thanks for letting me share."

"Thanks for sharing, Melvin."