

## From Ecstasy To Agony.

By Robert G. Borelli For Catholic Men's Ministries of Indian River County Florida

*Note: What follows is a fictional story based on men I knew and similar events that I witnessed during my own period of being amongst the lost. There are the Cradle to Grave Catholics that sometimes question their faith and then there are the Lost Catholics that find themselves bedeviled by their surroundings. This story focuses on the latter. The Author.*

The Burning Desire for Ecstasy and the continuation of that pursuit obtains nothing of matter and at its end, lies the suffocating ashes of Agony.

Hey John over here. Got your Text. Love those Cell Phone Areas at the airports.

Hi Jay great to see you. It's been awhile.

I almost didn't recognize you, the last time I saw you, you had a phony tail and a beard.

Yea I think it was about five reunions ago. That's the one I showed up a little out of it.

I'll say Man, you were stoned out of your mind. I laughed the whole time you were there. Grandma kept telling everyone that you were possessed by the devil and needed to be sprayed with holy water.

I don't remember that one but Grandma was probably right. It must have been a real show stopper. Better I don't remember. So how is Grandma these days? I always remember her as the one that got us to go to Church every Sunday and become Altar Boys.

Grandma passed two years ago. I thought you knew. I called your cell a couple of times left messages, texted you a couple of times, and even emailed you.

I'm so sorry. I don't remember getting the messages. Long story about my life then and now. I truly am sorry. I loved her. I'll keep Grandma in my prayers. So what have you been doing? I hear you're a College Grad.

I am and finally came up with a major. I followed you and I graduated with an Advertising Managing degree. Started my first job with a small advertising company in the City. Nothing big as far as Clients are concerned, just some car dealers and local stuff. Need to get a working resume going before I apply to the big guys like where you work.

Jay, I may not be the business model you should follow. Where is the reunion?

Wolfeboro, New Hampshire.

How long a drive from Boston Airport to there?

About three hours with traffic.

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Good it will give us time to talk. I must tell you my story. I started where you are now mostly handling copywriting issues for the big guys and getting my feet wet with the small revenue companies. I eventually started to move up the ladder. It took about three years before I could even talk to the big clients. When you get up there, it is another world. There is much more of things that you need to do then what they teach you in college. This is a world of not only selling your company but selling yourself. A lot of your Christian values gets shoved into the closet. I mean way back into the closet.

But isn't it that way with any job? Selling is not Christian charity nor is promoting yourself a bad concept. Is it not a part of every path to success?

You are right in your thinking about most jobs where you can balance your private life with your career life. Advertising in the big firms is literally getting inside your clients. It's not like working within a team concept but more like joining a tribe There is no balance and I fell into that trap.

I not following you. What trap did you fall into?

OK here is a picture of my career. My first client was an attractive woman in her early forties, that ran her family's cosmetic line company I told my bosses that I knew nothing about cosmetics and that maybe a woman at our firm that uses the stuff should handle that client. So here is the trap, I was told that the client was not interested in woman but she was interested in young men that appreciated beautiful woman, especially how they looked. She saw me and selected me to represent her company. Her novice approach was that she wanted a man's opinion on what he saw as attractive in a woman. Nothing in my college courses talked about those aspects of the advertising industry. So she became my client. This woman wanted me to go clubbing with her and her models but before we went I had to judge which ones looked the best based on the cosmetics they wore to make sure that they would be attractive to other men and woman in the clubs that we went to. So my job was to rate them in attractiveness. Then see if the ones I rated the highest got the most attention at the clubs as to allow her to make adjustments to the cosmetics according to the findings.

Hey what's wrong with that? I would love a job judging beautiful models. Not getting any negative vibes here all sound pretty smooth to me.

OK but there's more. So I started doing the clubs with my client and her beautiful models. Here's where another world exists. Amongst the loud noise and the dancing, there is the drinking and the drugs. But worst there are the beautiful women that have no problem going home with you for the night. So all of this came to me as being enjoyable and not at all work. Bottom line, I accepted it as normal. I found myself captivated by all of this and developed a burning desire for all this ecstasy.

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As I said my Christian values were shoved in the back of my closet. I was so much into this lifestyle that I even forgot where the closet was. So I succumbed to all of this. I dressed the part to fit in by letting my hair grow. I put it up into a phony tail, grew a beard, and basically fitted into the crowd. My life consisted of doing the gym in the morning, handling the simple requests of my female client during the day, taking a nap around 5 PM, waking to go clubbing with the models at around 10 PM, doing drugs and drinking all night, then back to the gym again in the morning. This was my life for a little over 3 years. I made a lot of money and earning none of it. One day a new girl was hired, a Midwestern girl with a solid family background. Kind of like what I was when I joined the company. Her name was Cindy. Since my client's account was extremely profitable, my Firm figured that I needed an assistant. For what I asked? Since I really wasn't doing anything one could call work. I got her anyway.

John, if I can interrupt here, sounds to me like you got a free ride. Let's see you were making a lot of money that you didn't have to work hard for, you were involved with beautiful models that you got paid to go clubbing with, you have plenty of drugs, booze and, I assume sex. Basically you were experiencing an ecstasy that most guys would die for and got paid to do it. A lot of guys I know would take a job like that in a heartbeat. So please again explain this trap you talked about?

OK Jay, hear the rest of my story and maybe it will change your mind about ecstasy. Ok back to Cindy, the time I had off from work I spent with Cindy. I found her to be so enjoyable that I wanted to do more with her, so I asked her to move in with me and she accepted. Once we were together, I introduced her to the lifestyle my client laid out for me. Cindy was very attractive, even without makeup, and my Client recognized this. She started to include Cindy with the other models. As beautiful as Cindy was without my client's line of cosmetics, with them she was an outstanding beauty.

Ok you got to stop here. This story, so far, does not fit with you nixing my statement that "A lot of guys I know would take a job like that in a heartbeat".

Allow me to finish. Little by little Cindy joined in with the dancing, the drinking, and the drugs. As time went on I found myself losing interest in the lifestyle. Maybe it was meeting Cindy that started it. I began asking myself, "what was the purpose of this self-gratification"? How many of those girls were like Cindy that came from middle American small towns? Did they grow up with Moms and Dads that took them to Church? Did they play with dolls pretending to be Moms? And what about the guys that were part of all the drinking and doing drugs, and participating in all of the other decadence that went on? Did some of them also grow up in small towns and had families that took them to Church? But more importantly, why was I doing this? I didn't witness anything like this in my youth. Why did I rebel against what I believed? This was not a natural order of a Christian society. So how did I get here? I got to thinking that maybe my client introduced me into her decadent lifestyle so as to justify her own immoral behavior thus giving her a mental acceptance. i.e. "You think I'm bad? Look at him."

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Cindy, evidently didn't see it that way for she had embedded herself in the lifestyle and was an active participant in all of the loud noise, the sex, the drinking, and drugs. I, on the other hand, was climbing down from the highs and started looking at my life from the other side of the room and I didn't like what I saw.

Stop a minute John! Interesting line, looking at my life from the other side of the room? What does that mean?

It means this. What I saw wasn't really me doing all those sinful things. And when I said I didn't like what I saw, I realized the end to all of this was not going to go down easily. I recognized that at this point, I was only in the eye of the storm, not out of the storm. One night after late night clubbing, I stopped at a coffee shop on the way home and met a guy I knew from the club. I only knew him by his nickname "Triangle" nobody ever used their real name. He told me that he had it with the life style he found himself in. Then he told me that he quit his job and was moving back to his home town. What followed from him, said it all. He said "I want to go back home and date a nice local girl that if I touched her in any sexual manner, she would slap me in the face and say, "never do that again unless we are married". Wow! I realized that was exactly what I wanted but I had a career that paid well and I had my commitment to Cindy.

How was Cindy a commitment? Could you not just break it off?

Ok! That was my long term plan. So I will continue. Before I could do that, Cindy told me she was pregnant and assured me the baby was mine. My mind saw this as a good thing. We could keep our jobs and add a little child and in all this, we could become a family. I discussed this with Cindy thinking we can make this work. I had to go out of town on business for a couple of days. The whole time out of town I was thinking about the joy of being a father. Remembering my own dad and grandpa and joyful at the prospect that I too would become a dad and have a family of my own and break from this decadent lifestyle and just be the "me" I was before I got involved in all of this.

Sounds like things started working out for you. Ok you had your fun. Did all those nasty things. So you repented and now it's over and time to move on. So it seems to me you finally had your "grown up" moment.

Yea it should have been, but it wasn't. I learned Life does not work that way. You don't wake up one morning and find you have grown up and need to behave like a grownup. Here's the rest of my story. When I got back to our apartment I wanted to share this joy with Cindy. But she was packing her clothes and told me she was leaving me. I couldn't believe it. I told her we were to be a family and maybe we could settle down in a different town and get different jobs. She said that she aborted the child and that she didn't need any baby messing up her body and her mind and that I turned into a boring S.O.B. and she was having too much fun with her own burning desire for ecstasy and that I was dragging her down. And then she left. My room went dark.

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I sat there all day and all night not knowing what to do. My life was a mess and not only did I mess my life up, I took a sweet innocent girl into the decadence that I slipped into and most likely ruined her life.

Wow! Definitely not a Cradle to Grave Catholic story. Please continue.

Maybe it could be, but one with a divergence. So my burning desire for Ecstasy and my continuation of that pursuit obtained nothing of matter and ended with an agonizing sorrow. I had a gun that some drug dealer asked me to hold for him just before the Feds arrested him. It was a loaded gun.

I took it out of the drawer, put the gun to my head, and just as I was about to pull the trigger, my phone rang. I put the gun down, thinking maybe it was Cindy regretting what she said, but when I looked at the caller ID it was Andrew, my old grammar school and high school buddy.

Hey I remember Andrew. He was a great guy always so nice to the family especially to your Mom and Grandma. They really liked him. He was close like a brother to you.

Yea Andrew and I were close. So after high school, Andrew went into the seminary to become a priest. I lost track of him or maybe he called me and I was too stoned to remember who he was. Andrew said that he was going to be in town for a couple of days, and yes he was a real Catholic Priest and he wanted to get together. I hesitated thinking I am a sinner's sinner how could I possibly meet Andrew. I heard Andrew say "Johnny are you still there"? Saying yes, I consented to a meeting. Andrew wanted me to go to Mass with him on the following Sunday. I agreed but said I could not go to communion since my life was not worthy of life much less a Catholic life. Andrew said "Johnny, I'm a priest why not confess to me"? I told him that if I did, he would lose respect in me. He countered saying the opposite would be true. I agreed and invited him to come to my apartment. After entering my apartment and after a big hug that was long overdue, we decided to immediately get down to my confession. I never did a one on one confession much less doing it to my best old friend, but I did it. Sobbing the whole time, I confessed my sins to my best friend, telling him that my pursuit of a burning desire for ecstasy and making money, totally consumed me, turning me into a worthless human being with no redeeming value. Andrew countered with "Johnny, God loves you no matter if you love yourself or not". Andrew, through his priestly duties, gave me absolution for my sins. My sobbing turned to outright crying for I what I just received from Father Andrew was the gift of giving me my life back and the desire to change my life forever. I never experienced anything so remarkable. The suffocating ashes of my Agony immediately went away. On the following Sunday we went to Mass, it was Pentecost Sunday.

Wow! Sounds like stories you would hear and see on EWTN.

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Yea, could be. It could well be. At Mass when I heard the readings, I realized that the second reading was about being lost and it hit home with me. I made a copy of that reading and keep it with me. Sitting in the pews of that church, next to my best friend Father Andrew, receiving Holy Communion for the first time in a long time, I came to realize that "The Burning Desire for Ecstasy obtains nothing of matter and at its end, lies the suffocating ashes of Agony". And Agony was where I was. But The Holy Spirit had other plans for me and showed me what I needed. First by my conversation with Triangle at the coffee shop, and after, when I put the gun to my head, and before I could pull the trigger, getting Andrew's call. It changed my life forever. After Andrew left to go back to his parish, I immediately quit my job and I now live in Florida, I started my own little advertising firm and handle small local businesses. I am a parishioner of a great Catholic Church in my small town on Florida's east coast. I am currently engaged to a real practicing Catholic Girl, that I would never touch inappropriately and we do not live together. We are planning our Catholic Wedding for next spring and I will be inviting our whole family to attend. Bottom Line, I can honestly say, that I was totally Lost and by the Grace of the Holy Spirit and people that truly loved me, I was found.

We are almost there. Wow John, what a great story. It would make a great book. Let me ask you, about your small company in Florida, could you find room to hire a new kid with an Advertising Managing degree?

Jay, I do have a room for a young advertising guy. Especially one that has tons of experience with Car Dealers. Yea, Come on down. You can stay at my place.

**CLIMBING A MOUNTAIN TAKES THREE TASKS; PLANNING, PATIENCE, & SKILLS.  
FALLING OFF A MOUNTAIN ONLY TAKES ONE TASK, A MISTAKE.**

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SECOND READING AT THE PENTECOST SUNDAY MASS. [GAL 5:16-25](#)

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Brothers and sisters, live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want. But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, lust, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.