

TURN YOURSELF AROUND

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INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM- DAY

HENRY (25) stands in front of the SINK. He is wearing a hooded sweatshirt patterned with various condiment and grease stains. His hair is disheveled.

His arms are shaking as he haphazardly splashes water on his face. He stares himself down in the MIRROR. His bloodshot eyes have the terror of a man not in control of his body. He grits his teeth and talks to himself in the mirror.

HENRY

You put your right leg in.

His right leg spasms wildly.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You put your right leg out

He forces his right leg down when his entire body begins to shake itself all around.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You do the Hokey Pokey and you turn yourself around.

He flinches at the last sentence.

He slings his open BACKPACK over his shoulder and a bunch of blank job APPLICATIONS for various fast food chains fall out.

He begins to reach down to grab them but some power seems to grab him and violently pivot him around.

He opens the grungy bathroom door, takes one last look at himself in the mirror, and dashes out.

INT. GYMNASIUM- DAY

Henry walks into a high school gym. There is a circle of CHAIRS set up at half court and a number of YOUNG ADULTS buzzing between a concessions TABLE and the chairs.

Henry is visibly shaking. He approaches a young woman standing by the chairs. This is PEGGY (22).

HENRY

Hi. Um. Hi. I'm Henry, I've never been here before but

His head jerks toward and begins to shake while the rest of his body stays put.

Peggy leaps back and stare blankly at him.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I really need help. It's never been this bad before.

Her leap has exposed to CIGARETTE BOX in her pocket. She notices and pushes them back down in her pocket.

PEGGY

You should talk to Morgan, our group psychologist. Most of us are just on the bottle or the smokes. The more... extreme cases she sometimes turns away.

Henry looks down, arms shaking, and the top of his head nods.

Peggy walks away, and GRANT (42) notices Henry. He strides over to him and throws out a palm.

GRANT

Grant G. Grant. Yes. That's my real name. No wonder I drink, right?

Grant looks at Henry who has not taken his hand, nor started to laugh at his obviously hilarious joke. Henry's whole body is shaking. He gives Grant a sympathetic look.

HENRY

I'm sorry. I don't shake hands. I can't. I shouldn't shake my arm.

Grant raises an eyebrow.

GRANT

Ah. A needle pusher, eh? Arms still sore maybe?

Henry attempts to shake his head once for "no" but this turns into a wild shaking from his neck up.

GRANT (CONT'D)

Ok. OK. Geez. Not Heroin. I get it. Well then, what's your poison?

Henry looks as if he's about to say it when his eyes begin to tear up.

GRANT (CONT'D)

Listen, punk, I've seen it all. So there's nothing you can say you're on that I haven't drank, munched, pushed, or snorted into this pathetic sack of flour I call my body.

He begins to look like he could go on for days but is interrupted by MORGAN (34).

MORGAN

Grant, let's not diminish the lives of our new friends again.

Grant repeats her words under his breath in a high pitched voice, the way someone would mock their fourth grade teacher, and goes over to the circle of chairs.

Morgan smiles at the quivering Henry.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Hi, I'm Morgan. And I'm not perfect.

HENRY

Hi. Hi, I'm Henry.

He offers a weak smile and she raises her eyebrows at him.

HENRY (CONT'D)

And I'm not perfect?

MORGAN

Well, not perfect Henry, we're really, really glad you're here. Don't mind Grant, he's been in this group for twenty years. He sort of views himself as the Founding-Fucked up-Father.

Henry laughs a little. Uncontrollably, his butt begins to thrust in and out. Morgan looks not a bit perturbed by the man unwillingly pelvic thrusting at her. He shifts and begins to shake it from side to side. This time faster.

HENRY

(mortified)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

She smiles gently.

MORGAN

Yep. You're definitely not perfect,
Henry. Come. Join us.

The two grab the last two empty chairs in the circle, on nearly opposite sides.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Hey friends, welcome back. And
welcome to all of you joining us
for the first time this week. As
you all know, we're here for
support

Her voice fades into background noise as Henry's right arm begins to twitch. He focuses on it and tries to steady it.

Members of the group have begun to stand up and introduce themselves.

MONTAGE- SUPPORT GROUP

Addicts introduce themselves and their addictions. Each tacks on an "And I'm not perfect" after their name and is greeted with mumbled acknowledgements from the group.

JENNY

Jenny, heroin. And I'm not perfect.

*
*

Henry's arm twitches.

MARSHALL

Hi, I'm Marshall. I'm an alcoholic.
And I'm not perfect.

*
*
*

Henry's arm raises itself. He forces it back down.

Grant begins a tangent of his colorful addiction saga.

We see Henry's right arm shoot back up and watch as he pretends to use it to scratch his nose.

He lowers it and buries his face in his hands. He is shaking in defeat.

From across the circle,

MORGAN

Henry? Want to meet the group?

INT. GYMNASIUM- DAY

Henry cautiously stands up. His eyes are wide.

HENRY

Hi. Hi. I'm Henry. And I'm not perfect.

His torso begins to twist about its center and contort itself.

The group looks on confused, judgmental. Henry notices their looks.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I need to turn myself around.

There is some muffled empathetic agreement. Henry's foot starts to rotate his whole body around. He stops it.

HENRY (CONT'D)

No. I mean. I really need to turn myself around.

Morgan smiles at him.

MORGAN

That's why we're here, Henry. We're glad you--

Henry cannot stop it anymore. He begins to jazzily dance around in a circle, humming.

He finishes and looks up at the group horrified.

HENRY

You don't get it. I can't stop turning myself around. I'm addicted to "The Hokey Pokey."

At the sound of his own words, he collapses in his chair and buries his face in his hands again.

Jenny raises an eyebrow.

*

Grant clenches a fist.

*

Marshall rolls his eyes.

*

But Morgan looks on him with a deep-seated empathy.

MORGAN

Thanks for sharing, Henry.

With a nod from Morgan, the group resumes and finishes up their introductions. Henry hardly hears them. He concentrates on holding his left arm steady with his right and not shaking it all about.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Well good. I'm glad to see all of you here today. We have a lot in common, in that we're all not perfect. We struggle with something that means something to us. Our addictions have become a central part of our lives. But they are not who we are. What is your addiction to you? Jenny?

Morgan looks to Jenny who begins easily. She's clearly done this before.

JENNY

I think I just really needed a friend.

*

At these words, Henry's eyes leave the support group.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. BACKYARD 1993- DAY

A giant banner reads "DANNY IS 5!". CHILDREN in Cone hats run about playing tag and desperately trying not to bite their nails.

There is a Gumby BOOMBOX playing music and a large group of KINDERGARTNERS dancing a curious dance involving lots of shaking of various limbs.

In a corner by himself sits YOUNG HENRY, terrorizing a half eaten piece of cake with a fork. Tears roll down his face.

A rambunctious five-year-old with a kind smile leaves the group of dancing kids and hobbles up to him. This is EDDY.

EDDY

Come dance with us!

HENRY

I don't know this song.

EDDY
 YOU DON'T KNOW THIS SONG?! What's
 your name again?

HENRY
 Henry

Eddy gives Henry a wry smile, takes Henry's fork, and throws it onto the table.

EDDY
 Henry, I'm Eddy. And this is the
 Hokey Pokey. It's super easy to
 learn. You're gonna love it.

Henry quickly wipes his eyes on his Power Rangers sleeve and runs after Eddy.

As he Hokey Pokies, his face lights up more and more, like someone reversing a dimmer switch in his eyes.

He smiles over at Eddy who beams and calls over:

EDDY (CONT'D)
 Want to come over after school
 tomorrow and learn the Chicken
 Dance?!

CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM- DAY

Henry is shaken from his reverie by a hard poke in the arm from Grant.

GRANT
 HOKEY.

He jabs his finger into Henry's arm again.

GRANT (CONT'D)
 HOKEY.

He waits for laughs. There are no laughs.

GRANT (CONT'D)
 HOKEY POKEY? It's fucking funny.

Morgan cuts him off.

MORGAN

Henry? What does your addiction mean to you? What does "The Hokey Pokey" mean to you?

Henry tries to shake his head softly. But this action turns into a violent "shaking all about" of his skull. He sinks his head into his hands again.

Various group members look on and roll their eyes. There is an audible scoff from Grant.

Peggy breaks through the aggravated grunts and eye rolls.

PEGGY

Gambling isn't fun anymore. It's killing me. It's the worst thing that's ever happened to me. I've lost everything.

At these words, Henry flashes back again.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. WEDDING HALL 2013- NIGHT

Henry sits at a table with EMILY at a friend's wedding reception. He grabs her hand gently and looks at her. She is the only person in the room to him.

HENRY

This will all be ours soon. Emily, all I want is to be your husband.

He looks at his watch.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Geez. I put in my song request over an hour ago. Who knew DJ stood for Doofus Jockey?

She smiles weakly.

EMILY

Henry, I need to talk to you.

The opening notes to "The Hokey Pokey" explode throughout the room. Henry leaps up.

HENRY

FINALLY! Can it wait, babe? We've gotta poke.

He drags her out of her chair onto the dance floor and begins to throw his right hand in and out.

She looks on thoroughly not amused. She cups her hands to her mouth and shouts over the corny dance music.

EMILY

Henry! Henry! I can't do this anymore. We lost our house because of this dance. It's me or the Hokey Pokey.

But Henry cannot hear her. He is in pure bliss.

He does "The Hokey Pokey and turns himself around" and as he turns to face Emily, he only sees the back of her head heading out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM- DAY

Henry flashes back to the present and sees the group reacting to him. He had been convulsing and urgently shaking and turning around. They look on irritated and angry.

Henry breaks into a sob and runs over to the refreshment table.

MORGAN

We're going to take a break, guys.
Help yourself to some coffee.

At the refreshment table, Henry shakily tries to pour himself a CUP of Joe.

Grant swaggers up to him, his face solemn.

He slaps a jittering Henry on the back.

GRANT

Listen, Hoke. You've gotta get out of here. We've all got real problems. Like really real shit that makes our lives unbearable. Your little dance thing is cute. But leave the suffering and convulsions to the professionals. You sicken me.

*

He grabs the piping coffee cup out of Henry's hand and drinks all of it in one gulp. It clearly burns his throat. He looks up at Henry and said.

GRANT (CONT'D)
Used to binge and purge Corrosive
Acid. Leave it to the
professionals.

He crunches up the Styrofoam and walks away.

Henry is destroyed. He breaks into wailing sobs and runs out into the hall.

He slumps down against a wall. And yanks an ipod out of his pocket.

He selects a playlist titled "HP" and scrolls down the list. It contains hundreds of versions of "The Hokey Pokey." He selects one by Meatloaf and closes his eyes.

INT. HALLWAY- DAY

Henry's eyes open as Morgan taps him on the shoulder.

He pulls out his headphones.

MORGAN
How are you?

HENRY
I can't keep a job. I have to go to the bathroom and Hokey Pokey in the handicap stall. I lost my house. I lost my girl. All I can do now is "shake it all about." All the time. All the fucking time. I'm like some broken Taylor Swift album.

MORGAN
You've lost everything?

Henry nods solemnly as he impulsively stands up and begins to "put his elbow in" and "put his elbow out."

MORGAN (CONT'D)
Do you want it back? Do you want to change?

Henry nods solemnly as he begins to "shake his elbow all about."

MORGAN (CONT'D)
You want to turn yourself around?

He nods a third time as he begins to "do the Hokey Pokey and turn himself around."

He realizes what he's just done and shakes his head.

HENRY

But I can't. It's hopeless.

Morgan grabs his left elbow that he is beginning to shake.

MORGAN

It's not. I think the method that worked for my addiction might just do the trick for yours.

He looks up.

HENRY

But I thought you were addicted to sniffing glue?

MORGAN

Primarily. But don't think I didn't have a bad Soulja Boy fixation that I had to beat. Overexposure. Overexposure is the key.

HENRY

But I love this song. I could listen for hours.

MORGAN

You're forgetting. Behind every great song, is a Kids' Bop version.

Henry's eyes light up. There may be hope.

INT. GYMNASIUM- DAY

Morgan and Henry reenter the gym. She is carrying a large CD PLAYER. She places it in the middle of the circle as Henry takes his seat next to a sneering Grant.

MORGAN

Friends. We've all got our shit. And nobody's shit smells any worse than anyone else's. Now we've all been really cruel to our friend Henry. So together with him, we're going to try to help him beat this. For as long as it takes.

She hits play on the CD player and walks back to her seat. An atrocious synth begins to play "The Hokey Pokey" and terrible children's voices sing along. Henry involuntarily stands up and begins to dance.

The group members look on in disdain and frustration.

MONTAGE- SUPPORT GROUP

The song plays on loop. As the members of the group watch Henry struggle not to dance, their faces weaken a bit. They look at one another and realize how authentic his suffering is, how equally bad his shit smells.

Slowly, various addicts begin to stand up and join Henry, putting their right and left feet in. The more people that join, the more they begin to sing along in solidarity. Especially calling out the line to "Turn Yourself Around."

Eventually the whole group is dancing besides Grant, who sits arms folded, and beer gut out.

It has been about two and a half hours of atrocious Kids' Bop voices. SMOKERS are panting from exhaustion.

Henry turns himself around one final time, claps, and sings "That's what it's all about!" when suddenly, his eyes flash.

HENRY

I...I hate this song! My God! I
hate this song!

His entire body goes rigid and he stands up completely straight.

He slams off the CD player. *

He rushes over to Morgan and throws his arms around her. *

HARRIS, a smoker, pulls a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket and chucks it across the room. *

MAXIE, a drinker, pulls a can of beer out of a backpack and crushes it under her foot. *

Jenny dumps a bag of needles into the trashcan. *

There are exultant tears of joy. *

In the midst of all this, Grant rises from his chair.

GRANT

Hey Morg? Can you turn that song
back on?

All of the members share a wan smile. *

The Hokey Pokey starts up. *

END

*