

THE MAN IN THE BED

A Short Skit Presented With Love by:

Casting & Coordinating: Fred F.

Written by Michael M.

The Players:

Bill W.

Dr. Bob

Bill D.

Sister Ignatia

Desk Nurse

Young Nurse

Mrs. Dobson

Narrator

Our skit depicts events surrounding
the first twelfth step call made by
Bill W. and Dr. Bob.

It takes place in June of 1935 at Akron
City Hospital.

Dr. Bob and Bill W. will meet Bill D.
(aka The Man in the Bed)
And they will try to pass the message
on to another.

*Please note, it is only through a liberal use of
dramatic license that we are able to include
Sister Ignatia in this skit and relocate her to
Akron City Hospital.*

Presented by *the Grapevine*, 4/28/01, VT Area 70 Convention, Burlington, VT
9/22/01, VT District 6 Round-up, Rutland, VT
10/26/02 HMB Area Convention, Lake George, NY
7/1/2005 International Convention, Toronto, Ontario

SCENE I

Dr. Bob and Bill at table in Dr. Bob's house. Bill D. in his Hospital bed, nurse at center stage nurses station.

NARRATOR: Our skit depicts events surrounding the first twelfth step call made by Bill W. and Dr. Bob. It takes place in June of 1935 at Akron City Hospital. Dr. Bob and Bill W will meet Bill D., (also known as “the Man in the Bed”) for the first time.

Our set shows Dr. Bob's home, the nurse's station or meeting area of the hospital, and Bill D.'s patient room.

- *At this time the narrator will make any announcement's or changes from the play program –*

SCENE II
[*At Dr. Bob's house.*]

BW- We have to do it for ourselves Bob.

DB- I was on the wagon for two years-I couldn't do it.

BW-I don't mean by ourselves- I mean for ourselves.

DB-You mean—like us, two drunks?-together?

BW-YES! That's it! ... Don't you remember it?...when we met. Do you remember what you said?

DB.- Oh yeah, "I think it was something like ; ...I can't talk to you for to long.....I'm not feeling well."

BW-And I said: "I'm just glad you agreed to see me at all" and you said, Mr.Wilson.....

DB-(speaking right in) I've had my share of help. Let me tell you now-I consider my problem "personal". I don't ask help from well meaning strangers. The best have tried their wares on me...medical men, psychiatrist, ministers. I've been prayed over and carved up more than a Christmas Turkey. So,...just what do you think a man like "you" can do for me?

BW-"Dr", I didn't come here to help you, I came here to help me"

DB- I see what you're getting at now. We can do the same thing with other fellow. We could...

BW- (cutting in excitedly) We have to start with guys who are ready to quit.

DB. – We have to help them find some of God there comfortable with.

BW.- But how can We know if they'll be ready to listen?

DB.- Well, we could get a good start with the help of the sister at the Hospital. Let me give her a call and ask.... I'll bet she can find us a "prospect".

SCENE III

(Hospital nurses area) [The Sister is seen “comforting” a young nurse, and speaking to another woman (Mrs. Dobson) when the phone rings.] (Narrator says, “ring”)

Sister I: “Hello Nurses station.”

Dr. Bob: Hello Sister, This is Dr. Smith, I need your help with an idea...

Sister I: "Oh Doctor!" (*With an oh-no not again, kind of tone.*)

Dr.. Bob: No, No! Sister, It's not for me..(*Collects himself*) y'see, I need a patient, I mean...

Sister I :Doctor maybe you should talk to the desk nurse.

Nurse 2: Hello Doctor?

Dr. Bob: Yes, I have been working with an associate of mine from N.Y. We believe we have an idea that will be an effective treatment for the alcoholic. We need a patient ---I mean is there anyone in desperate shape from alcohol? Someone we might try to talk with?

Nurse 2: Oh yes Doctor we have a real corker! He's just beaten up a couple of nurses. Goes off his head completely when he's drinking- but- he's a grand chap when he's sober. He's been in here eight times in the last six months. Right now we've got him tied up real good. Will he do?

Dr. Bob: OH YES! Please- try to get him into a private room.
Tomorrow, we'll be down to talk with this man after he "clears up" a bit.

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SCENE IV

(Opens with sister Ignatia, a young nurse & Mrs. Dobson, speaking in nurse's area.)

Sister I: I don't want to build up your hopes. I know the Doctor told you a little of what he's done....but, he's coming in today...

Mrs. Dobson: I don't know WHAT to think...I'm just so tired...

Young Nurse: I don't care, I'm not going back in there, he's crazy—He just scares me!

Sister I: It's all right dear; you won't have to, if you're afraid.

Mrs. D: I'm going to go in. I just hope he can hear me.

(She goes to Bill D's room) (Bill & Dr. Bob move to nurses area)

Dr. Bob- Good morning sister, this is Mr. Wilson from New York,...the main I told you about,...he believes, I mean, We, think we have a program that can turn alcoholics around.

Sister I. - Oh you do, do you ?! Well Doctor I suppose you already tried it yourself, have you? *(little laugh)*

DB- Yes Sister, now about Mr. Dobson...*(busies himself with papers)*

(Attention switches to Mrs. Dobson & Bill D in his room)

Mrs. D- *(sympathetically)* "You're going to quit..." I've been talking to these two men...

Bill D. *(interrupting)*. WHAT two men? What do you mean talking about me?

Mrs. D.- take it easy...anyhow these two men- they think they have a plan where they think they can stop drinking. Part of the plan is that they tell it to another drunk. They say this will help them stay sober. Please, they're going to be here soon!

Bill D.- Well, everyone else has been laying into fixing me, OI guess it couldn't be too bad to talk to these guys for a little while. After all if it will help them with the cure, well I guess I could at least listen.

SCENE V

[Bill & Dr. Bob enter hospital room.]

BD-Who are you fellows? Why am I in my own room? I've always been in the ward before. *(Struggles with restraints)* Am I going to die?

Dr. Bob- Mr. Dobson my name is Bob Smith, this is Bill Wilson, we'd just like to talk to you a little. We have an idea about a treatment for for alcoholics, like us.

BD-Oh..No- I'm a goner. You don't understand- "I flat out hit a nurse last night!" She 's just a young girl... all she was doing was trying to help me!

DB.- we know we've both done some terrible things we're ashamed of....but...

BD.-*(interrupting)* But **NOT** like ME!; the last three times I left here, I got drunk on the way home. I'm afraid to go out that door. I can't understand what happens.

BW-*(to Bob as if Bill D. cannot here him)* I believe he's worth saving and working on, let me ask him some things. *(Turn and speak to Bill D.)* Do you want to get off it Bill? Stop drinking??

BD.- I can't, I just can't. Every time I leave here I'm fully determined , in my own mind, that I would NOT get drunk again, at least for six months or so,... But look at me).
(struggling with restraints)

BW- I know... we couldn't do it by ourselves either. We're not here to take your rights away... but we have an idea...

Bill D. *(cuts in)* what do you guys know, I'm telling you...I just... *(Sounds irritated and Bill D is struggling harder at this point when Dr. Bob interrupts by putting his hands on Bill D's to stop him from straining)*

Dr. Bob- "Bill" *(forceful)* relax your arms a little. If you keep pulling on these you'll just hurt your wrist and you could be cut and scarred badly, and really damaged.

Bill D- (*cuts in*) What do you guys know about it?

(Dr. Bob looks at Bill W. questioningly, as Bill W. nods and rolls up his sleeves to reveal scars on both wrists from shackles on his wrist. Dr. Bob also pulls up one sleeve and shows Bill D. that his wrist has the same kind of scar. ---Immediately Bill D's body relaxes and his attention seems more focused – he has accepted that these men's experiences are valid and alike his own..

Bill W. (*in a relaxed and calm tone*) Well...I was saying, we have a program where by we think we can stay sober. Part of this plan is that we take it to someone else, that needs it AND wants it. Now, if you don't want it we'll not take up any more time and we'll be going to look for someone else.

Dr. Bob- Do you think you could quit of your own accord? Because if you can, that's wonderful, but, we're looking for a man who knows he's got a problem, and knows he can't handle it himself. If that's you, then I'd like to know if you believe in God, or maybe something like that...that can help you. I'm asking because I think ...I mean WE think, we've had a kind of "spiritual experience" and ...

(Bill D. *interrupts*)

Bill D- I used to be strong for the church, but that won't fix it. I've prayed to God on hangover mornings and SWORN that I'd never touch another drop, but by nine o'clock I'd be boiled as an owl. I still believe in God, but I guess He doesn't believe in me.
(*Spoken in a dejected tone with tired out feeling*)

Bill W. - But Bill, Do you think that we...

(*Dr. Bob puts his hand up to get Bill W. 's attention, sensing that it's too much for Bill D. to continue*).

Dr. Bob- Maybe we can see you again tomorrow-you'll feel better,-so-just think this over a little won't you? We'll let you rest awhile OK?

[*Bill W. and Dr. Bob start moving toward the door and just before they exit Bill D. calls to them.*]

Bill D.- I'll see you again tomorrow, right?

Bill W. and Dr. Bob- YOU BET!!

-PAUSE, AS PEOPLE MOVE-

MOVE TO SIDE

SCENE VI

[Bill W. & Dr. Bob in house at the table. Bill D. in hospital bed, nurse & sister & Mrs. Dobson in center.]

Dr. Bob- I think we really have a chance with this thing.

Bill W. – I don't know maybe we should have laid off the "spiritual experience" angle for the first visit.

Dr. Bob – We didn't do any bible thumping – I know he knows what we're saying. The question is ... is he ready to actually try something that relies totally on something outside himself?

(Bob pauses with a thought)- and say's,

You know Bill, if we're going to keep doing this, we really ought to think about writing this stuff down.

Bill W. looks at Bob with some curiosity & considers the idea silently, then they both appear to resolve the thought at the same time, Bill snuffs it and say's

Bill W.-Na! *(Bob nods)*

SCENE VII

[Attention switches to Hospital room]

-Bill D. with Mrs. D-

Bill D. *(to Henrietta)*- those guys seem to know what I'm thinking. I've been going over everything I've messed up. Opportunities that I've discarded, all the things I've wasted. Everything I try seems to get fouled up...why didn't I want to quit? If I didn't want to quit I certainly ought to want to quit!

[Pauses and with a kind of "at- peace" resolve tone says]

"I don't care what I have to do. I'm willing to do anything to stop drinking. I've got hold of something that I just can't handle by myself."

Scene VIII

(The next day)

[At the hospital- Bill D. is in his room and the young nurse (whom he frightened earlier and hit during his arrival) speaks to him from outside his door. She's very cautious.]

Y. Nurse- Mr. Dobson? How do you feel this morning?

Bill D. – Much better thank you nurse... I'm so sorry for what happened... I didn't know what I was doing. Is it possible I can get these things off today? (Raising his hands with restraints.)

Y. Nurse (Enters room slowly) OK, I think we can try this... (She unties his arms)

[Hospital area outside the room]

2nd Nurse or Sister- (Greeting Dr. Bob and Bill W.)- Doctor it's amazinghe really wants to see you!

(Bill And Dr. Bob enter Bill D's room- he does not have restraints on and holds his arms up in welcome.)

Dr. Bob- You made the right decision here Bill but now we have to tell you a few things. We've got some bad news for you. It was bad news for us and it will be bad news for you. Weather you quit six days, months or years, if you go out and take a drink ... you'll end up in this hospital- TIED DOWN- just like you have been. That's because you're an alcoholic.

Bill D. - I just thought I was a drunk.

Bill W. - No, you have a disease, and it doesn't make any difference how long you go without it...what we've figured out is, after a drink or two you'll end up just like this again.

Doc Bob- You can quit for one-day cant you? 24 hours- that's all we're talking about.

Bill D. - "Sure I can do that, anybody can do that!"

SCENE IX

Finale
(Everyone on stage)

Bill D. and Henrietta in Hospital room.

Bill D. - Henrietta! Get my cloths – we’re going to get out of here!

Everyone moves on stage and forms a line- Narrator comes on stage with the cast.

Narrator – Bill D. walked out of that hospital a free man, never to drink again.

AA’s Number one group dates from that very day.

Bill W. and Dr. Bob continued to help thousands this same way. Their experience taught them these facts:

“We believe there is no middle of the road solution.
The great fact is this, and nothing less...That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences, which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life.”

Bill D. was to share his own story many times, and in his own writing he concludes his story in the “Big Book” with these words:

Bill D. – “I came to AA solely for the purpose of sobriety, but it has been through AA that I have found GOD.