

INT. A CONFSSIONAL -- DAY

Mike Byrne sits opposite a young priest. He has a tumbler in his hand that half filled with rye.

**MIKE BYRNE**

I don't know which way to turn anymore, Father.  
look, I know I'm supposed to be reciting sins, but  
I haven't sinned, Father. I just need some words.

Something to help me through the night.

You got people waiting, Father?

**YOUNG PRIEST**

You're the last, Mike. You want to  
go to my office where we can talk face-to-face?

**MIKE BYRNE**

No, I like it here. I like the dark, the smell—  
all the years I been coming to confession –  
I always liked it. I feel like a kid again.

**YOUNG PRIEST**

Happy like a kid?

**MIKE BYRNE**

No, Innocent like a kid.

**YOUNG PRIEST**

That's nice to hear.

Mike takes a long sip.

**YOUNG PRIEST**

What about the booze. Mike?

**MIKE BYRNE**

Oh, it's fine, Father. I can control  
it anytime I want to.

**YOUNG PRIEST**

I don't think so, Mike.

**MIKE BYRNE**

Sure I can. It helps me sleep.

**YOUNG PRIEST**

I think you are kidding yourself.

**MIKE BYRNE**

I'm not, Father.

**YOUNG PRIEST**

I think you are, Mike. Look. I know you and Sheila  
are going through a bad time. But you  
were drinking hard a long time before that.

**MIKE BYRNE**

Well- you know, Father –  
it's a stressful job.

**YOUNG PRIEST**

Don't I know it, Mike. My father-  
God rest his soul- cops and booze.

It happens a lot.  
The department used to have its own program.  
What happened to it?

**MIKE BYRNE**

I have no idea.

**YOUNG PRIEST**

Why don't you check it out?

**MIKE BYRNE**

You know, Father. You go into the  
program and the word is out.  
Your whole career can change.  
Next thing you know, they got you going to  
see of their psychologists or some other  
ungodly thing.

**YOUNG PRIEST**

What about AA?

**MIKE BYRNE**

I went once. A bunch of self-pitying  
jerks sitting around feeling  
sorry for themselves.

**YOUNG PRIEST**

I don't think so, Mike. You know,  
They got what they call the 12 steps.  
You know what the 3<sup>rd</sup> step is?  
turning your life over to a higher power.  
They want you to come back to God. Michael.

Mike is silent

**YOUNG PRIEST**

Think about it. What was the  
stressful part, Mike?

**MIKE BYRNE**

What?

**YOUNG PRIEST**

You said the job was so stressful.  
I know the obvious part, the streets, the crime,  
the human degradation.  
For you, was there more?

A long pause.

**MIKE BYRNE**

Yes.