

The Cleaner

This past week the second season of *The Cleaner* premiered on the A&E cable network. I had an open AA meeting to attend so I hit the Devo button and planned on watching it later in the week when I had time. Thursday night, as CNN, Fox News, MSNBC and all most every other channel was covering the death of Michael Jackson I sat down to watch *The Cleaner*.

The Cleaner on the same network with another program about addiction *Intervention* is about Warren Boyd, a real life "extreme interventionist." I also asked Bill Iverson, the Intervention Specialist at Lost & Found Ministry to watch the program for his reflection.

The part of Boyd is played by Benjamin Bratt, a recovery addict who must balance his unwavering dedication to helping others suffering from addiction with a very dysfunctional personal life. While he works to help others, he is recovering from his own relapse following 25 years in recovery. Not being a drama critic I will not review the acting surrounding the core of the show, I will only offer observations of the show's ability in portraying the life of addicts and their family's desperate attempts to help. However, I will add that many of the people who attend Recovery Worship say that the drama is a bit overdone.

The show does do an excellent job at showing what a person in addiction goes through; it also shows the pain that the addict inflicts on his or her immediate family members. Bratt and his team use unconventional, and maybe even illegal means to get a person clean. The show does show that despite the pressure from family, the ultimate decision to seek help must come from the person with the addiction. It also shows addiction for what it is, an illness.

After watching the program Bill, who has been in recovery for 30 years and who has assisted families in over 1000 interventions, also gave the show high marks in realistically portraying the struggle that face addicts and their families. *The Cleaner* also accurately portrays the importance of AA/NA meetings and some of the core fundamentals of a life in recovery. The show also uses the "language" of addiction, such as One Day at a Time, Higher Power, and sponsor. It would make an excellent teaching tool within a congregation to break down old barriers, and beliefs concerning addiction.

The Cleaner along with the A&E program *Intervention* would work together well in a learning environment. *The Cleaner* can be seen each week on A&E at 9:00 pm (Eastern Time) and is repeated throughout the week.

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