



THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW

DECEMBER 10, 2003

Copyright 2003 Harpo Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Prepared by Burrelle's Information Services, which takes sole responsibility for accuracy of transcription. No license is granted to the user of this material other than for research. User may not reproduce any printed copy of the material except for the user's personal or internal use and, in such case, only one copy may be printed, nor shall user use any material for commercial purposes or in any fashion that may infringe upon Harpo, Inc.'s copyright or proprietary interests in the material.



DECEMBER 10, 2003  
Page 1

HOST: Oprah Winfrey

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Ellen Rakieten

ADDICTED: BACKSTREET BOY A.J. McLEAN

(Excerpt from Backstreet Boys video)

OPRAH WINFREY: For the first time, Backstreet Boy A.J. McLean goes public.

You aren't afraid of, like, OD'ing?

Mr. A.J. McLEAN (Backstreet Boys): I did OD twice, went into convulsions.

WINFREY: The boys wanted to be here today.

The emotional reunion.

Mr. McLEAN: Kevin came and he broke the door down.

Mr. KEVIN RICHARDSON (Backstreet Boys): I told him, 'I hate you. You're dead to me.'

WINFREY: Then, this Wall Street tycoon blew millions on crack.

Why aren't you dead?

Next.

Hey! Must be purple day. Thank you. Hi. Nice to see you. Good. OK. Good to see you. Today is a big day for my first guest. He is talking publicly for the first time about a secret life that millions of his fans knew nothing about. Offstage, Backstreet Boy A.J. McLean was battling for his life.

(Excerpt from videotape)

WINFREY: At just 14 years old, A.J. McLean became a member of the Backstreet Boys, one of the most popular boy bands in history.

(Excerpt from Backstreet Boys video)

WINFREY: A.J. was living a dream, performing to sold-out crowds of screaming young girls all over the world. When he stopped by our show, he told me that his life was too good to be true.

Mr. McLEAN: (From previous program) It's like--it's all of our dreams come true, and our fans are great.

WINFREY: But sudden fame, money and temptations became too much for him to handle. And soon, A.J., known as the bad boy of the Backstreet Boys, started living up to his reputation. He started drinking, doing drugs until all hours of the night. While making the music video for the song "The Call," he tried cocaine for the first time. He says after that, he was hooked.

DECEMBER 10, 2003  
Page 2

Eventually, his partying turned into an addiction he could no longer control. His problem was causing a rift in the group. A.J. would show up late to rehearsals and sometimes not at all. At the height of his addiction, every single day, he was drinking a bottle of Jack Daniel's, using excessive amounts of cocaine and taking two to three pills to help him sleep. On the MTV show "TRL," the Backstreet Boys, missing their fifth member, finally came clean with A.J.'s problems.

(Excerpt from "TRL")

KEVIN: A.J. is going to receive treatment for depression, anxiety and his excessive consumption of alcohol.

Unidentified Man #1: And this is going to be for how long?

KEVIN: Initially for 30 days.

(End of excerpt)

WINFREY: Please welcome A.J. McLean.

Good. Good. 'I say no to drugs.'

Mr. McLEAN: Yes, I say no to drugs.

WINFREY: You now do that for one solid year?

Mr. McLEAN: One solid year now, yes.

WINFREY: One solid year. How hard has it been?

Mr. McLEAN: It's got its ups and downs. I mean, you know, I--I didn't really work my program the first time I got sober, which is going to automatically stop the process. Your chances of relapse are much higher. And I relapsed, and now I have a year again sober.

WINFREY: Now isn't--would you say it's harder--I know it's--it's got to be difficult no matter who you are, but if you're living a lifestyle of--as a rock 'n' roll idol...

Mr. McLEAN: Right.

WINFREY: ...I would think it would be tougher.

Mr. McLEAN: It is. I mean, you've...

WINFREY: Because that--you're in an environment where you can get it easily, you have the money to get it. You...

Mr. McLEAN: It's a lot more accessible. Doing what I do for a living, any city and state that you go to, if you have connections--when you're a drug addict and you're an alcoholic, you make connections in every city that you go to so you know when you get there, you make the phone call before or after the



show, and you get whatever you're going to get.

WINFREY: When'd you first start using?

Mr. McLEAN: First started using drugs the night of "The Call" video shoot.

WINFREY: Really?

Mr. McLEAN: That was the first time I tried cocaine. We had--our individual call times were in the evening, so we had--it w--the entire video shoot was--was meant to be shot in the evening, so we all--we all had call times, one in the morning, two in the morning, three in the morning. And we only shoot or shot once as a group, which was the very final scene in the video. Everyone else shot individually. I went out that night for my solo shot, had a couple drinks that night, went back to my hotel room, passed out for like an hour, had to wake up. And I was really groggy, and a friend of mine that was in the hotel room with me said, 'Look, I've got some coke. If you want a pick-me-up, just do two bumps and, you know, whatnot' and...

WINFREY: And you'd never done coke before.

Mr. McLEAN: No. And I...

WINFREY: And it was a conscious choice, because obviously, you'd been exposed to it.

Mr. McLEAN: I'd been exposed to it.

WINFREY: Yeah.

Mr. McLEAN: And the way I look at all drugs, alcohol, any type of addiction, I don't for me personally believe in addictive personality. Everything's by choice.

WINFREY: Yeah.

Mr. McLEAN: You choose to continue doing the drug repeatedly. You choose to--to--to drink excessive amounts.

WINFREY: But doesn't there come a point when you've had so much in your system that it becomes harder to make the choice to let it go?

Mr. McLEAN: It becomes harder to make the choice to let it go, as well as it becomes harder to get the high, because your body becomes so immune to it.

WINFREY: So you need more.

Mr. McLEAN: You need more and more and more to get the buzz that--that you got the first time.

WINFREY: So at the po--at the point of your--before you--at your peak, I would say, at your drug peak, how much were you taking?



Mr. McLEAN: I was doing about a fifth of Jack Daniel's a day, about an eight-ball of coke a night and...

WINFREY: And what's an eight-ball of coke?

Mr. McLEAN: Eight-ball of coke I believe is more than a gram. It might be two grams. It's--it's about a baggie about that big, about that wide full. Usually I would get it in rock form or crack cocaine and then break it up and, you know, snort it.

WINFREY: Would you smoke it, too?

Mr. McLEAN: Never smoked it. I never got that far. Never did any--any--anything intravenous. I have a fear of needles. You wouldn't know it with the tattoos, but I have a fear of needles.

WINFREY: I was just going to say.

Mr. McLEAN: Yeah, I don't--I don't like the--the straight needle. I can deal with this tattoo, but...

WINFREY: OK. OK.

Mr. McLEAN: It just got progressively worse and, you know, between the alcohol and then doing so much cocaine, I would be up till six, seven in the morning. I would then take prescription pills such as Xanax or...

WINFREY: What does that do for you?

Mr. McLEAN: Xanax is a--Xanax is a prescription drug for anti-anxiety, but the excessive amount I would take would put me straight to sleep. And I would finish it off with a shot of Jack Daniel's to make sure I went to sleep.

WINFREY: And so you weren't afraid of, like, OD'ing?

Mr. McLEAN: I did OD twice that nobody knew about. First time that I OD'd, I was with my girlfriend at the time, and I drug her through the trenches as well. I got her to do coke with me. I didn't want to be on a different plane than her. I wanted her to be wherever I was in my head. And I got it from someone that wasn't a reliable source. I believed that it was laced with something else, probably speed, and the reaction I got was not the same reaction I got when I did coke normally from the people that I got it from, that I trusted. And went into convulsions, hard sweats, foaming at the mouth. My eyes rolled back in my head for about 10 seconds. It was just a horrible thing. And I wouldn't take myself to the hospital because I didn't want anyone to know that I was doing drugs. So I just stayed at home and dealt with it.

WINFREY: Because you're still performing regularly during this time.

Mr. McLEAN: Uh-huh. And I didn't want anybody to know. The boys didn't really know. You know, I...



WINFREY: The boys didn't know.

Mr. McLEAN: They didn't know that I had been doing coke yet. They knew about the excessive drinking.

WINFREY: Because how did this show up in your work?

Mr. McLEAN: Lack of responsibility. A lot of flaking on the guys. Not showing up for rehearsals. Vocally, my performance had gone straight down. I couldn't hang on stage as much. I was winded all the time. Bags under my eyes. Lack of sleep. A lot of lack of sleep.

WINFREY: Were they ever trying to talk to you about it? Did they ever approach you about it?

Mr. McLEAN: Kevin approached me a couple times about it and said--you know, he kind of approached me and kind of asked me--he's like, 'Dude, are you doing other things besides, you know, alcohol?' And I--I actually came to him in a hotel room in New York one time, and I said, 'Hey, do you want to do some, you know, blow with me? Do you want to do some coke with me?' and he's like, 'No, I don't do that.' And then that was the first time I think he really knew...

WINFREY: That you were.

Mr. McLEAN: ...that I was.

WINFREY: Well, I guess so.

Mr. McLEAN: Yeah. I mean, you know...

WINFREY: Yeah.

Mr. McLEAN: ...I--I kept it a secret for a pretty good amount of time.

WINFREY: Well, just last night, A.J. returned to one of his old drinking hangouts and our camera crews with him. That's coming up next. I bet that's hard to do. Is it?

Mr. McLEAN: It is.

WINFREY: Yeah. We'll--we'll look at that when we come back. We'll be right back.

(Announcements)

(Excerpt from Backstreet Boys video)

WINFREY: Backstreet Boy A.J. McLean is talking about his painful addiction to cocaine, pills and alcohol for the first time publicly, and just last night, A.J. returned to one of his old drinking hangouts and our cameras went with him.

(Excerpt from videotape)



DECEMBER 10, 2003  
Page 6

Mr. McLEAN: This is hands-down one of the first times I've been in this place sober, clear-headed, not all blah. It looks different from a sober point of view. When I used to come here or go anywhere to drink, I would not drink socially. I would drink to get drunk. I needed to drink to feel normal. If I can remember my worst nights in this place, kind of hard to remember, I could do any--any--anywhere between 12 and 17 shots of Jack per sitting.

Thirty minutes ago, there was a bottle of Jack sitting right there. I--I eyeballed it for a second. If I went out to a strip club or went out to a bar and got tanked, I'd go in the bathroom and do a couple lines to sober up to drive home. But now here it is six in the morning, I'm wide awake on coke, I'm going to have some more whiskey to put me to sleep and pop a couple Xanax. I drove drunk tons of times, drove drunk. And I'm just lucky I didn't kill someone, myself or get a DUI and ruin my whole career.

When my grandmother passed away, I dove directly into the bottle, and it was a bottle a night, sometimes two, sometimes it was 'shrooms, pot, Quaaludes, Percocet, Percodan--whatever I could get my hands on to numb the pain.

I literally OD'd twice, and not a lot of people know that. I hurt my family. I hurt my loved ones. I hurt my relationship, myself. I hurt my career, but it had to happen. And I'm glad that it happened when it did.

(End of excerpt)

WINFREY: Why?

Mr. McLEAN: Why? Probably because it was--the way I look at it, it was bound to happen when it did because I didn't have a normal childhood, didn't go to high school like every other kid does and gets influenced by ecstasy and coke and pot. When you're in high school, it's kind of the norm to see drugs, go party with your friends. I was in a hotel room getting tutored when I was 16. So I never really got to be out there and to see it. So at some point...

WINFREY: Because the group started--How old were you? Were you six...

Mr. McLEAN: I was--I was 14.

WINFREY: ...14.

Mr. McLEAN: Yeah.

WINFREY: I thought that--14.

Mr. McLEAN: And at--at a certain point, it was like, OK, you know, I think I'm going to try to experiment this on my own. And I just--any time you told me it was black, I told you it was white. I was always going against--you know, tell me to go, I'm going to stop.

WINFREY: Yeah. Because you grew up with the Backstreet Boys.

Mr. McLEAN: Pretty much.

DECEMBER 10, 2003  
Page 7

WINFREY: Yeah. OK. A.J.'s mom, Denise, wrote the book "Backstreet Mom," documenting A.J.'s rise to fame and his hard fall--and his hard fall.

Mr. McLEAN: Hi, Mama.

WINFREY: Hi. Hi.

Ms. DENISE McLEAN (Author, "Backstreet Mom"): Hi.

WINFREY: Welcome.

Ms. McLEAN: Thank you.

WINFREY: And I heard you used to go out drinking with your son, is that true?

Ms. McLEAN: Yeah, early on, when--when he was of age, we would--we would go out and have fun, go to--go to clubs and dance and enjoy ourselves. I mean, you know, it was a lot of fun to do that. But being out on the road, it relieved pressure.

WINFREY: When did you first realize that he--that it was more than fun, that he was doing cocaine?

Ms. McLEAN: Well, he actually came to me one time when he was home for a brief period. He came to me, and he started to tell me things like, 'I think I'm drinking too much and I'--and then he told me that he did try cocaine on the video shoot, but he told me he would never do it again. And...

WINFREY: You were lying, right?

Mr. McLEAN: Oh, yeah.

WINFREY: Yeah.

Mr. McLEAN: Oh, yeah.

Ms. McLEAN: Because I'm a mom. I believed him.

WINFREY: And you were a mom and believed him.

Ms. McLEAN: Right.

WINFREY: Yeah. He said he'd never do it again.

Ms. McLEAN: Exactly.

WINFREY: Yeah.

Mr. McLEAN: So it's--so let it be written, so let it be done.

Ms. McLEAN: Yeah.

WINFREY: Yeah. And so were you in denial, because y--when he came to you and





said, 'Look, I think I'm drinking too much,' what did you say?

Ms. McLEAN: I kind of--I brushed it off. I--I definitely was in denial. There's no question about it. And at the time, I was also in a position in my life where I was more--I was focused too much on being a manager to the group and helping him with his career, and I had lost my path a little bit on the mom side. Because I was just so into trying to keep that momentum going, because they were kind of at a--a lull because they had fired management. They were in disarray, and I just said somebody's got to step in and do something, and I did. And that became my life, and so when he came to me in need, I'm thinking, oh, well, it's just--you know, it's--it's part of the lifestyle. He'll get over it. Because he'd been through phases. He's a kid, you know. He's been through phases up and down, and--and--and I'm just thinking, oh, it's a phase. It can't be. Can't be real. And I--I denied it, definitely.

WINFREY: You did deny it.

Ms. McLEAN: Oh, yeah.

WINFREY: Do you still trust yourself 100 percent? Because weren't you two years and then relapsed, right?

Mr. McLEAN: Yeah.

WINFREY: OK.

Mr. McLEAN: I was two years and then I relapsed.

WINFREY: OK. Now you've been a year.

Mr. McLEAN: Mm-hmm.

WINFREY: So until you get beyond two years, will you always be thinking, 'I still haven't...'

Mr. McLEAN: You know, there's a--there's a saying that is--we relax, we don't struggle. We're often surprised how the right answers come to us after we've tried this for a while. And it's true. After we try working the program, the right answers will come to me about how to live my life sober every day. I mean, when you're an alcoholic and a drug addict, you take anything and make an excuse why you should use that night--anything. Someone cuts you off in traffic. Somebody, you know, yells at you at a club. Somebody pushes you or you trip and fall or you hurt yourself. You find any reason to pick up and use again.

WINFREY: And now it's just you--is it--and I think the Alcoholics no--Anonymous philosophy, the AA philosophy is a--it's a day at a time, a moment at a time.

Mr. McLEAN: One day at a time.

WINFREY: One day at a time. Day at a time. We'll be right back.

DECEMBER 10, 2003  
Page 9

(Announcements)

(Excerpt from Backstreet Boys video)

WINFREY: A.J. says it was the other Backstreet Boys that helped to save his life. Correct?

Mr. McLEAN: Yeah.

WINFREY: How so?

Mr. McLEAN: There was a breaking point for the fellows and me. I started getting worried because we had random drug testing going on, because there was skepticism amongst the five of us if I was doing drugs or not.

WINFREY: Because none of the other guys were drug users.

Mr. McLEAN: Not--not that I know of and especially not the way that I was doing it. I mean, they all went out and had a beer once in a while.

WINFREY: Yeah.

Mr. McLEAN: Fine, you know, but they didn't abuse it the way I did.

WINFREY: Yeah.

Mr. McLEAN: So before every show, we would go and do a urine test, and I would go and get mine from somewhere else, from somebody who I knew was clean and try to keep cheating it and cheating it and cheating it.

WINFREY: So you would borrow urine.

Mr. McLEAN: Mm-hmm. You wo--you'd--you'd go to whatever nth degree that you could and not get caught. And then finally, it came down to it where Kevin made his intervention with me in Boston. And we had a day off. We were supposed to go throw the first pitch out at a kids' Little League game, and we had all agreed to do it. And I said, 'You know what? It's my day off. I don't really have to go.' I had partied la--that night before. I was like, 'You know what? Screw it. I don't--I don't need to go.'

Kevin was not feeling it, per usual. I know Kevin was, you know, 'No, baby, you will,' and, you know, he came and he broke the door down, and then he tried to get into--my bedroom had a separate door and I double bolted it and called me every name under the sun, told me he'd never trust me again, told me he hated me. And that was it. That was it for me. I was like, you know what? I can't do this anymore. This is done. Called my security. Called my mom. I said, 'I want to come home. I want out of the group. I don't--I can't do it anymore.' And the next day, I flew to Sierra Tucson in Tucson, Arizona.

WINFREY: Wow. Well, the boys wanted to be here today to tell you how proud of you they are. So come on out, Nick, Howie, Brian and Kevin.



So good, so good. Have a seat. You guys take that seat. I'll stay out here. That's great. That is so good. Surprise.

Mr. McLEAN: Oh, great.

WINFREY: Surprise.

Mr. McLEAN: Now my beard's going to run.

WINFREY: Oh.

Mr. BRIAN LITTRELL (Backstreet Boys): The only thing, you didn't wear your suit, man.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Yeah, we got all dressed up.

Mr. LITTRELL: Hey, we got all dressed...

WINFREY: Came in from London...

Unidentified Panelist: We got all dressed up.

WINFREY: ...who--who--who came in from London?

Unidentified Panelist: Nick.

Mr. McLEAN: Nick

WINFREY: Nick did.

Mr. NICK CARTER: I came in from London.

WINFREY: Nick, thank you.

Mr. CARTER: Anything for him, man. That's what it's all about.

Mr. McLEAN: Now my beard's going to run. Thanks, guys. Appreciate it.

WINFREY: Kevin, Kevin, he was saying it was because of you and the rest of the guys.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Well, it got to a point where we couldn't stand the person he was becoming. He wasn't the same person. He wasn't Alex. He was some, whatever, A.J. the rock star. And he wasn't the guy we knew and--and grew with and I didn't want to be around him anymore. I couldn't stand him, and it--it had reached the point where he was totally unreliable. He was lying. He was just not a good human being.

WINFREY: Not showing up for rehearsals. Not showing up.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Not showing up for rehearsals. Not showing up for anything. Lying. Reneging on his responsibilities. Saying yes to things when he should have said no to obligations and--and things, and--and I--I reached a point



where I'm like, 'You know, either you're going to change or you're going to--I'm--you're not going to be part of my life anymore.' So--and it was hard.

Unidentified Panelist: It was...

Mr. RICHARDSON: And, you know, the whole--the whole world found out about it. And it was hard. And we aired our laundry out. We, living in the spotlight, try to keep things tucked under, you know and...

WINFREY: Kind of hard to do.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Yeah.

WINFREY: Kind of hard to do if you're knocking the door in and--and so how does it feel to be here to see him today?

Mr. RICHARDSON: I'm proud of him. It's good to--it's good to--good to be able to carry on a conversation with him and look him in his eyes and see a person behind those eyes instead of just some glaze. You know, he--he...

WINFREY: It had gotten that bad?

Unidentified Panelist: Yeah.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I mean, he...

Mr. McLEAN: Oh, yeah.

Unidentified Panelist: Pretty much.

WINFREY: Yeah. Brian, yeah?

Mr. McLEAN: Oh, yeah.

Mr. RICHARDSON: He just looked dead.

WINFREY: Just looked dead. What do you want to say about what had happened?

Mr. LITTRELL: I was just going to interject, Kevin and myself and Nick, we were rehearsing in Florida for the "Black & Blue" tour, and he didn't show up to a rehearsal, and we were calling him on his phone, and he wasn't answering. And--and he would just--I guess he would just lose his phone whenever he felt convenient for him so he couldn't get in touch with anybody. We were calling his home. He only lived five minutes from the rehearsal hall. So Kevin and myself and Nick actually broke into his home in Florida, and that was one of the first times that it really--the intervention really took place, because we saw him laying in his bed where he couldn't even get out of bed. And for us, that was like, you know, what's--what's up? You know, we have so many things to live for. We have so many things to be thankful for, because God has blessed our lives in so many different ways, and I know he knows that now, and--and that's good for me, you know. It's--it's a closure for me, because I know that he's a man and he stands up for what he believes in and he can move



forward, so...

WINFREY: Nick, what do you want to say to A.J.?

Mr. CARTER: You know, the--the thing about A.J. that I have been able to learn and I think that that's, you know, what this is all about, why we're all sitting here, is because we--we want to learn from people's experiences and be able to not make the same mistake twice.

WINFREY: Right.

Mr. CARTER: And being 23 and the youngest in the group, I was able to look at him and--and see the things that he was going through and be the little brother in the group. I have to thank you, you know, for being as strong as you are and being the person that you are, especially to come on this show and to do--to--to tell everybody and to--to say all the things that mean that much to you to your heart, and it really helped me out, and I'm sure it's going to help a lot of people out there, too, so...

WINFREY: Howie. How, what'd you want to...

Mr. HOWIE DOROUGH (Backstreet Boys): I've known A.J. the longest. We met when we were little kids, and...

WINFREY: How little? How little?

Mr. DOROUGH: I think I was around 14 and A.J. was around 11.

Mr. McLEAN: I was like...

Mr. DOROUGH: Ten.

Mr. McLEAN: ...eight, nine, something like that.

Mr. DOROUGH: Yeah

Mr. McLEAN: Yeah.

Mr. DOROUGH: It's been over 15 years, maybe 16 years we've known each other. And I used to see A.J. all the time. We'd go out to different auditions in Orlando, and he was--at the time was the kid with a jean shirt, with a tie and a briefcase, and...

Mr. McLEAN: Oh, yeah.

Mr. DOROUGH: ...(Unintelligible).

Unidentified Panelist: You were geeky.

Mr. McLEAN: Oh, yeah.

Mr. DOROUGH: ...but we all--we all loved him. And I've just seen A.J. grow and I--it's--just seeing him grow up and how A.J. has always, I felt like,



wanted to be accepted, he's always wanted to be loved by people, and I think he's always been searching for himself, and I think that's wha--we even noticed with the first signs, the--the earrings, the tattoos, just all those things. And I think I've seen with A.J., when suc--success comes along, a lot of times, people deal with success in different ways. And A.J. chose a--a--a route to go that led him into extra substance abuse, and I think that's where he felt his acceptance there for a while. And I'm so proud that he was able to find that at such a young age and realize that was the wrong thing and that he was able to take on something, I mean, in his early 20s, where people, you know, are in their 30s, 40s and 50s that are just coming to this point and realizing in life, and A.J. took that step upon himself, which I think was a ma--a major step at a young age to--to take that away from his life.

WINFREY: Well, what we're all grateful for is that he was able to take the step.

Mr. DOROUGH: Exactly.

WINFREY: Because a lot of people go down before they can take the step.

Mr. McLEAN: They do.

WINFREY: So I know this is a pri--surprise.

Mr. McLEAN: Yes, it is.

WINFREY: Yeah.

Mr. McLEAN: I was like what? Wait a minute.

Mr. LITTRELL: We saw you walk out--when she introduced you at the beginning, we saw you walk out in your pants, and we were like, 'Oh!'

Mr. McLEAN: Well, I was going to wear a suit. I wa--I--I was going to wear a suit. I was totally going to wear a suit. And then I said, you know what? I just want to be myself. I want to just be as if I were...

Mr. DOROUGH: Well, I--I actually dressed down.

Mr. McLEAN: I was going to wear a suit, but...

Mr. DOROUGH: I dressed down today. Earlier I had clothes that...

Mr. RICHARDSON: Oh, it...

Mr. DOROUGH: Next thing I know, these guys tell me they were wearing suits. I'm like, 'Wait, A,J,'s not going to be wearing a suit, though.'

Mr. LITTRELL: You know, I talked to this one last night...

Mr. DOROUGH: ...(Unintelligible).

Mr. LITTRELL: Yeah. I talked to this one last night. He said, 'I'm



shopping.' I said, 'What are you shopping for?' 'Yeah. You know, I'm, you know, doing--doing OPRAH,' and I was like, 'Why are you shopping the night before?' So I see what you got.

Mr. McLEAN: But you--but you've got to like my shirt, you know.

Mr. LITTRELL: Yeah. Yeah.

WINFREY: This is what you got.

Mr. LITTRELL: I love the shirt. I love the shirt.

Mr. McLEAN: Got to like the shirt.

Unidentified Panelist: You know...

WINFREY: So what do you want to say to them? I mean, you had support. A lot of people didn't have support.

Mr. McLEAN: And a lot of people don't get support. A lot of people are left on their own to, you know, clean their own wounds. And thank you. You guys really helped a lot. You--you may not realize in what ways, but you did. Each of you had a--a different part in helping me realize that I really did have a problem. Because when you're in a--when you're in--in your--living in your addiction, you don't want to admit it, and you won't admit it, you know. And you guys helped me open my eyes and realize. And then, you know, Kev, you were the--you were the nail through the coffin for me. You literally, I mean, broke the door down, for crying out loud, you know. And the things you said I know were out of love. They weren't out of real anger and hatred. They were out of love and out of frustration. I know that now. Then, of course, you know, I'm like, nyah--but thank you, each of you, thank you a lot, and it's good to have us all back together again. It's good for all of us to be in the same frame of mind again.

WINFREY: We'll be right back. We'll be right back.

(Announcements)

(Excerpt from Backstreet Boys video)

WINFREY: We're talking to A.J. McLean and the Backstreet Boys have joined him. A.J.'s going public for the first time about his struggle with alcohol and drug addiction. And we just surprised him with the rest of the boys on the show. So why did you decide to go this public? I mean, Kevin was saying earlier that it's hard to keep anything secret in this business. So we all knew you had a problem, but to come all the way out like this to say...

Mr. McLEAN: Because I haven't really officially done or said anything since rehab, explaining what's happened after rehab and explaining what I've gone through and what is--and--and basically where I am today. I've done a couple interviews for magazines, but never a real in-depth, heart-to-heart, face-to-face, and, you know, this was a--this was an opportunity for me that I wasn't going to pass up to really just talk about it.



WINFREY: Now it's interesting, because, you know, what Nick was saying earlier about you being able to do it and what that does for other people and it's the only reason I'm ever interested in hearing other people's stories, is because I think the millions of people who see you might see themselves in you, might see themselves in you, and might find something as a kernel of hope or a kernel of being able to turn things around for themselves. But you just said something interesting; that even when Kevin was knocking down your door and they had broken into the house to try to rescue you, you were so in denial, so much in your own stuff, that you really didn't want help. So can you save somebody that doesn't want to be saved?

Mr. McLEAN: They have to want to do it themselves. They really truly do. I mean, you can--you can push the envelope and push the envelope, but if they don't want it--if they don't want the help at that point in their life, then it's not going to happen.

WINFREY: We'll be right back.

(Announcements)

WINFREY: So when Kevin came and knocked down your door literally and called you a few things...

Mr. McLEAN: Every name in the book, yeah.

WINFREY: ...every name in the book that day, out of love...

Mr. McLEAN: Out of love.

WINFREY: ...out of love that you now see, was that the turning point for you?

Mr. McLEAN: Yes. That was when I said I--I can't do this anymore to myself. And I can't do this anymore to them and to my family and to my relationships that I had with my friends, my fiancée, everything. It--it had to stop then. Because had it not stopped then, it would have just gotten progressively worse to the point of death for me, killing someone else, DUI, jail time, getting kicked out of the group--whatever it could have been, I would have lost my life.

WINFREY: So was it--was it what he said or how he said it?

Mr. McLEAN: Both, both.

WINFREY: Both.

Mr. McLEAN: Both.

WINFREY: It was what he said and how he said it.

Ms. McLEAN: Kevin can be very convincing when he wants to be.

Mr. CARTER: He's good like that.





Ms. McLEAN: He's good like that.

Mr. McLEAN: Yeah, baby, you can.

WINFREY: OK, Kevin.

Mr. McLEAN: Yes, baby, you can.

Mr. CARTER: That's what big brothers do.

WINFREY: So I'm not going to ask you to rehash what you said, but what was the essence of what you said that was able to get him to turn around? Because I know lots of people are watching and want to know and there is...

Mr. RICHARDSON: I told him don't ever ask me for anything again. I don't trust you. I hate you. You're dead to me.

WINFREY: You're dead to me. And that s--got to you.

Mr. McLEAN: At first, I kind of sat there in my room behind the door and just lapsed in a "psychotic" state of like complete denial. And when he walked out of the room, I lost it, started bawling, and then called my security on the phone and said, 'Dude, I want to go home. I'm done with this.'

Mr. RICHARDSON: And there had been instances that had led up to this.

Mr. McLEAN: Yeah.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I mean, I had had heart-to-hearts with him. You know, at the beginning of the tour, we broke into his house. We had a counselor on the road for him that he was not utilizing, and--and he--because he--just like he said, he didn't want to. He wasn't ready. And so I was just at--at a rope's end. You know, we made a commitment to do this tour. We've got millions of fans. People have paid to come see us perform. They--they love us. They--they love our music. They want to see us. And--and I love you, and I can't stand the person you're becoming, and I don't want to be around you anymore, and you're--you're just destroying everything around you, and I don't want to be near you anymore and...

WINFREY: Were you willing to--to let that be it? Wi...

Mr. RICHARDSON: Absolutely.

WINFREY: ...because a lot of people say that and--and they don't mean it.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Absolutely. Absolutely.

WINFREY: That was it for you.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I was done. I mean, I was--I--I mean, I'd reached--I'd tried everything I knew in giving him second chance after second chance after second chance, and...



DECEMBER 10, 2003  
Page 17

WINFREY: Well, thank you all for being here today. Nick, you came all the way from London. I know you're a little jet-lagged right now.

Mr. CARTER: Actually, I slept last night, amazing enough.

WINFREY: Amazing enough.

Mr. CARTER: So I'm good.

WINFREY: Thank you. Thank you, Howie. Thank you so much. Brian, thank you.

Mr. McLEAN: Thank you, guys.

WINFREY: Thank you. Thank you, Denise. Thank you. Denise McLean's new book, "Backstreet Mom."

Next, he was a Wall Street tycoon worth \$20 million. His secret addiction made him lose it all. We'll be right back.

(Announcements)

WINFREY: Peter Jaquith was living a very glamorous life many could only dream of and had built a fortune worth \$20 million. Then he secretly got involved in an underground world that cost him his fortune and nearly his life. Take a look.

(Excerpt from videotape)

Mr. PETER JAQUITH: There it is, my old house with the million-dollar view.

WINFREY: At first glance, you would never know that just a few years ago, Peter Jaquith was living a lavish lifestyle.

Mr. JAQUITH: I had a home in Santa Monica on the beach, and I had a home in Palm Springs.

WINFREY: He went to some of the best schools, and by the time he was 30, he was working on Wall Street in one of the most prestigious law firms. He married, had two daughters and was living a dream.

Mr. JAQUITH: At my peak, I was worth approximately \$20 million.

WINFREY: Living large, Peter had four homes and thought nothing of spending \$40,000 on a weekend getaway. But after his second marriage failed, Peter's life took a turn for the worse.

Mr. JAQUITH: I found myself drinking more and more, and one evening I met a young lady who came back to my apartment with me and introduced me to cocaine. The first time I smoked crack cocaine, I had such a euphoric experience from the drug that I craved it. I found myself using the drug 24/7.

WINFREY: Peter's friends, family and co-workers had no idea what was really going on behind their backs.



Mr. JAQUITH: I left the family totally out of my life. I lived a very private existence in the drug world. After using cocaine for a few months, I got the brilliant idea that I would have my drug dealer use my custom Mercedes to pick me up in the morning and take me to the office and if I needed drugs to bring them.

WINFREY: Within a few weeks, the drug dealer and the car disappeared.

Mr. JAQUITH: I didn't know the man's last name. I didn't know where he lived. I never saw the car again.

WINFREY: Peter's once charmed life spiraled out of control in a matter of months. He says he spent every last cent he had to feed his addiction. He lost it all buying crack cocaine and alcohol.

Mr. JAQUITH: I had gone through all of my resources. I only had the clothes on my back. I had lost everything.

(End of excerpt)

WINFREY: A turning point for Peter was the morning he woke up under a table in a fancy New York hotel and realized it was Easter. Tell us about that, Peter.

Mr. JAQUITH: Well, I had been homeless for a while, and I just walked into the lobby of the Marriott Hotel. I was tired, so I crawled under a table with--a round table with a tablecloth to the floor. I woke up the next morning, and I crawled out from under the table, and I looked wretched, I'm sure. I looked around the lobby and everyone was dressed beautifully. The women had on, you know, lovely dresses. The--some of them had corsages. And the men were all in suits. It dawned on me that it was Easter Sunday, and I realized then that I had a problem, and I had to deal with it. And I got the Yellow Pages and started looking for rehab.

WINFREY: You're born white and male in America, which means that your possibilities are endless. And how does a guy who can make \$20 million in his lifetime end up smoking it all away to crack? How did you end up there?

Mr. JAQUITH: I was an alcoholic, and I didn't know it. Alcohol is a disease of denial.

WINFREY: Yeah.

Mr. JAQUITH: And I was in very deep denial. I'd been drinking all my life. If--my four years in college were strictly a four-year binge.

WINFREY: Did you start doing the same thing with crack?

Mr. JAQUITH: I tried not to do crack initially except a couple nights a week. But that lasted for maybe two weeks, and then suddenly I had--I had to use it all the time.

WINFREY: Wow.



Mr. JAQUITH: Yeah.

WINFREY: Next, Peter's daughter was completely blindsided by her father's secret life as a crack addict. She had no idea until it was too late.

(Announcements)

WINFREY: Peter Jaquith was a multimillionaire living a secret life that nearly took him out. He lost his \$20 million fortune to a crack addiction. His daughter, Pamela, was completely in the dark about it.

(Excerpt from videotape)

PAMELA: I had a very charmed life. We took trips to Europe, flew on the Concorde, things like that.

WINFREY: But slowly, Pamela began to discover her father's secret life.

PAMELA: I had this perspective of him as being always successful. Anything he touched turned to gold. He came to Thanksgiving at my sister's home. It was clear that he was physically deteriorating in some sort of fashion. I don't think anyone still had any grasp that it was a drug problem. A very good friend of mine literally laid it out to me, that your father is spending X number of dollars a week on drugs. I think it took that blanket of a statement for me to understand.

It was very sad to see him deteriorate, and there was also feelings of anger that someone would throw their life away that way. I mean, he was a brilliant man who did wonderful things for people, who people respected, and he was throwing it all away. He was becoming something that was both frightening and something you didn't want to be a part of. I do remember my husband and I changing the locks on our house because he had keys to our apartment. There were times that I didn't know if he was alive or not. It becomes a possible reality that--that he might just--might not survive, and in some ways, I think there were times that I thought that that might be the best.

WINFREY: Pamela says she wishes she never knew her father's secret. Now they're working on rebuilding their relationship.

PAMELA: I do love him very much, and I have no anger towards where he is today and, if anything, I think he's become a better person.

(End of excerpt)

WINFREY: There are so many families who have lost loved ones, if not physically lost them, but lost them emotionally to crack addiction. Can you explain that addiction?

Mr. JAQUITH: It's an all-consuming need that you develop when you start using that drug, if--if you are like I was, an alcoholic. Now some people probably can--if they don't have that genetic history, can walk away from it, but I couldn't. And I just had to have it all the time. And I'd wake up in the morning, when I did get to bed, and I would immediately reach out for



it. And that would start my day. And then it would continue through the day and maybe through two or three days before I'd get back to bed again.

WINFREY: Wow. You say now you have a little more than \$100 in the bank. You're a guy who used to spend \$40,000 in a weekend. What does that feel like?

Mr. JAQUITH: You--you have a little bit of anxiety when you can't pay your bills, as most people find out. On the other hand, I have never been more comfortable in my skin in my life.

WINFREY: Really?

Mr. JAQUITH: And so there's a serenity that I enjoy beyond anything I ever had prior to going through this process and getting into recovery, and that carries me beautifully.

WINFREY: So you were a \$20 million Wall Street guy. Now you make ends meet with odd jobs. You've worked as a delivery man...

Mr. JAQUITH: Yes.

WINFREY: ...and cleaned other people's toilets.

Mr. JAQUITH: Yes.

WINFREY: OK.

Mr. JAQUITH: Yeah.

WINFREY: And you find a sense of serenity from that?

Mr. JAQUITH: Well, I needed to do that to get where I am today. I have, you know, this ego that's constantly trying to jump out of me, and...

WINFREY: It's very humbling, cleaning other people's toilets.

Mr. JAQUITH: Yes, it is.

WINFREY: Is it not? Yeah.

Mr. JAQUITH: And I needed--I needed to do that.

WINFREY: Yeah.

Mr. JAQUITH: And I know that. And I also know if I hadn't lost all my money, that I would have killed myself. I'm sober now almost six years. It will be six years November 11th.

WINFREY: Thank you for sharing your story. Appreciate you coming on. We'll be right back. We'll be right back.

(Announcements)



DECEMBER 10, 2003  
Page 21

WINFREY: Thank you to the Backstreet Boys, to Peter, and all of my guests today. Bye, everybody. Thank you.