

FADE IN:

Our Christmas story opens with cartoon animation:

Santa's sleigh recklessly speeds through the sky. He holds a beer can in one hand and uses the other to try to guide his sleigh. Pages from his naughty and nice list fly everywhere.

The reindeer are all over the place. Santa's cartoon eyes are represented with drunken X's.

Finally, Santa and his reindeer crash onto the rooftop of a house.

End Animation.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - NIGHT

A drunken narrator begins to speak:

NARRATOR

(slurring)

Tw'as the night before Christmas,
when all through the mouse...

Everything seems calm in the house. We see the flashing lights of a Christmas tree blinking in the hallway.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Not a creature was stirring...

We see RYAN, a long-haired, fully-bearded stoner, passed out in front of the television.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Not even the house.

A cat sleeps contently on the chair.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The stockings were hung by the
swear jar with care...

We pass by a row of six stockings bearing names.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

In hopes that Santa Claus soon
would be there.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK! The pounding on the door is followed by a scream and the sound of a car crashing into the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALFWAY HOUSE - NIGHT

This cozy three story home looks more like a fraternity house with a balcony that stretches across the second floor. It is the same house we saw in the opening animation.

We hear various male and female voices alternating in the opening narration while a theme song plays softly.

NARRATION

This is the story of six relapsed drug addicts...all with court charges pending...picked by the D.A. to live together...and have our lives taped...with hopes of avoiding jail time...find out what happens...when people stop being real...and try to stay sober.

ONE WEEK EARLIER

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

DARYL, a reformed, but still dazed drug and alcohol counselor, reads from a piece of paper.

We see a camera mounted in a top corner of the room.

DARYL

Before we get started tonight, I've got a surprise. It seems the producer of the show is getting into the holiday spirit and got the house an early Christmas present.

ROD, a punk rocker in his late twenties, laughs.

ROD

Is he finally going to fix something around here?

DARYL

No, but he's letting us have a cat in the house.

Tweak, an extremely burnt out junkie, leans forward.

TWEAK

I refuse to clean the litter box.

DARYL

Tweak, we are all going to have to chip in and take care of this cat. It's another responsibility you can earn points for.

RYAN, the resident stoner, raises his hand.

RYAN

Can I name the cat?

DARYL

If everyone agrees, yes Ryan, you may name the cat.

PATTY, scraggly thin and aged beyond her years, jumps in.

PATTY

As long as you don't name it something stupid like "Kittie" or "Cat."