



Chart Review: Christopher Crosby "Chris" Farley

PERSONAL INFORMATION

33-year-old caucasian male; comedian / actor; died in 1997

Events Leading Up to This Clinical Encounter: American comedian and actor. Farley was known for his loud, energetic comedic style, overweight-obese (300 +lbs) and was a member of Chicago's Second City Theatre and cast member of the NBC sketch comedy show Saturday Night Live between 1990 and 1995. Farley and Chris Rock were introduced as two of the show's new cast members in early 1990.

In late 1997, Farley died as a result of a drug overdose at the age of 33. Cocaine intoxication and morphine overdose. While a physical comic, Farley also performed impersonations of famous people in government and even of Tom Arnold, who gave Farley's eulogy at his private funeral. This was not very surprising, as Chris's AA sponsor was Tom Arnold.

BACKGROUND

Farley was born in Madison, Wisconsin. His father, Thomas "Tom" Farley, Sr., owned an oil company, and his mother was Mary Anne (née Crosby), a housewife. He had four siblings: Tom Jr., Kevin, John, and Barbara. His cousin, Jim, is a vice president at Ford Motor Company. Farley's family is traditionally Roman Catholic, and Farley attended numerous Catholic schools in his hometown, including Edgewood High School of the Sacred Heart. According to Joel Murray, a fellow Second City cast member, Farley would "always make it to Mass". Many of his summers were spent as a camper and counselor at Red Arrow Camp, near Minocqua, Wisconsin.

Farley graduated from Marquette University in 1986, with a concentration in communications and theater.[9] After college, he worked with his father at the Scotch Oil Company in Madison. He got his start in professional comedy at the Ark Improv Theatre in Madison, and at the Improv Olympic theater in Chicago. He then performed at Chicago's Second City Theatre, initially as part of Second City's touring group. He was eventually promoted to their main stage.

Along with Chris Rock, Farley was one of two new Saturday Night Live cast members announced in the spring of 1990. On SNL, Farley frequently collaborated with his fellow cast members Adam Sandler, Chris Rock, Rob Schneider, and David Spade, among others. This group came to be known as the "Bad Boys of SNL".

Off-screen, Farley was well known for his pranks in the offices of Saturday Night Live. This would refer to Sandler and Farley making late-night prank phone calls from the SNL offices in Rockefeller Center, with Sandler speaking in an old woman's voice and Farley farting into the phone and mooning cars from a limousine. Sandler told Conan O'Brien on The Tonight Show that NBC fired him and Farley from the show in 1995.



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PERSONAL INFORMATION (cont.)

After Farley and most of his fellow cast members were released from their contracts at Saturday Night Live following the 1994–1995 season, Farley began focusing on his film career. His first two major films co-starred his fellow SNL colleague and close friend David Spade. Together, the duo made the films *Tommy Boy* and *Black Sheep*. These were a success at the domestic box office, earning around \$32 million each and gaining a large cult following on home video. They established Farley as a relatively bankable star and he was given the title role of *Beverly Hills Ninja*, which finished in first place at the box office on its opening weekend. However, drug and alcohol problems interfered throughout Farley's film work, and production of his final film, *Almost Heroes*, was held up several times so Farley could attend rehab. Following his final guest appearance on SNL on October 25, 1997, his hoarse voice and flushed skin were the subject of public scrutiny. In the final years of his life, Farley had sought treatment for obesity and drug abuse on 17 occasions. On December 18, 1997, he was found dead by his younger brother, John, in his apartment in the John Hancock Center in Chicago. An autopsy later revealed that Farley had died of a cocaine and morphine overdose early that morning. Advanced atherosclerosis was cited as a "significant contributing factor"

Christopher Crosby Farley was most famous for his stint on Saturday Night Live, and probably the Chippendales sketch is the finest example of this, although he did appear in films as well. In his personal life, he idolized John Belushi. He once said that he "dreamed of being John Belushi. That's why I went the Second City (comedy troupe), Saturday Night Live route. I wanted to follow him." In the end, he went pretty much the same way his idol did, 16 years previously.

Chris once said, "I have a tendency toward the pleasures of the flesh. It's a battle for me, as far as weight and things like that." He had been in rehab at least a dozen times, and was scheduled to go again when he died.

Chris had bought an apartment in the John Hancock Building, on Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago. His apartment was on the 60th floor. Here's the front door, and here are the very unfriendly guards in the lobby, which Farley surely passed through many a time.

His last day was Wednesday, December 17th, 1997. He spent it primarily with a hooker called Heidi. Chris hired hookers regularly. Heidi was hired for Farley by a friend for \$2,000. She joined Farley at a party in Lincoln Park (in Chicago) at 11 AM. There were drugs going around. Later that day, Heidi took Farley back to her apartment – where they continued to smoke crack and snort heroin. January 2008 Findadeath pal Pete Hertzberg sends a picture, which is most likely the door they used. Chris claimed he'd been up for 4 days, without sleep. They tried to have sex, but Chris couldn't.

Cut to 11 PM – Chris and Heidi were back at his apartment in the Hancock building. She was getting pissed off because she wanted to get paid, and Chris claimed that the friend was supposed to pay her. They supposedly tried sex again, unsuccessfully, and finally at 3am she decided to take off. Farley was clearly inebriated, and as she was leaving his apartment, he collapsed about 10 feet from the door. Heidi claimed she could hear that he was having difficulty breathing. He said to her, "Don't leave me." Figuring he had finally passed out, she snapped a photograph of him lying there and then left.





PERSONAL INFORMATION (cont.)

Chris Farley's brother John found him the next afternoon. Chris was still lying 10 feet from the door, wearing sweat pants and an open button down shirt. He was supposedly clutching a baseball cap and rosary beads. There was a blood-tinged fluid coming from his nose, and a white, frothy fluid coming from his mouth. John called 911. Chicago Fire Fighters received the call just after 2pm, and Farley was pronounced dead at the scene. He was 33 years old. So was Belushi. So was Jesus Christ.

One version says that a search of his apartment turned up no illegal drugs, but plenty of prescription drugs. Another version is that it was littered with booze bottles and bags of white powder. Chris's body was taken to the medical examiners, was given an autopsy, and samples were sent for toxicology testing. When the results came back, his death was ruled as accidental. "Chris Farley died of opiate (morphine) and cocaine intoxication and his death was determined to be accident." Other things in his system that did not contribute to his death include fluoxetine, morphine, marijuana and the antihistamine fluoxetine. (Findadeath.com friend Kathleen sent this update in "Fluoxetine is not an antihistamine, it's the generic name for Prozac. Whoever provided the info might have meant to put fexofenadine, the generic name for the antihistamine Allegra. It was just a minor point, but I used to work in a pharmacy, so I have all these names branded into my brain now." - Thanks Kathleen!) His weight (296 pounds) created a narrowing of three coronary arteries, which was a contributing factor in his death. He also had an enlarged heart and his liver also showed fatty changes consistent with heavy drinking.

Here's some more science, courtesy of Findadeath.com friend Scott Williams:

Heroin is metabolized into morphine in the blood stream and is the "opiate" found upon autopsy when someone dies of a "speedball"; classically heroin and Cocaine, (sometimes Heroin and Methamphetamine). Given the world of street-corner pharmacists, I can assume by the stated findings that heroin, not morphine, was the fatal ingredient. (Heroin is a Hell of a lot easier to get on the streets of New York than pharmaceutical Morphine, it adds up). It looks like Chris Farley followed his idol, John Belushi's, example to the end. Not only in his career, but in death, including, age, drugs, and manner of death. Sad. Very sad.

Speedballs are now more common than straight Heroin overdoses in EMS. We paramedics administer naloxone to reverse the effects of a Heroin OD and sometimes find ourselves fighting with people who have been brought from under the opium overdose and coma, to tweaked, psychotic battles with the remaining rage of the speedy drugs that were ingested with them. There is another syndrome with Heroin, not necessarily in overdose enough to cause respiratory depression as in most Heroin deaths, but a reaction to Heroin that causes an altered cellular wall permeability in the alveoli (Lung sacks) that allows fluids, plasma, blood cells, to flood into the lungs and drown the user with astonishing speed, and no medical treatment can prevent rapid death. The result is a pink, blood tinged, frothy sputum from the mouth and nose (blood and plasmids) with rapid death to which no medical treatment can mitigate.

In any case, Chris wanted to follow John, his hero, in life. He did so to the end. No doubt.

At 3pm on Friday, his body was then taken to the McKeon Funeral Home, 634 W. 37th Street, on the south side of Chicago. No doubt his casket passed through these doors. On the 20th, he was taken to the Johnson Williams Funeral Service in Madison, Wisconsin, where a private funeral was held on Tuesday.

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PERSONAL INFORMATION (cont.)

On Tuesday the 23rd of December, there was a funeral mass held at Our Lady Queen of Peace Roman Catholic Church (thanks Beca), in Madison. Over 500 attendees included Lorne Michaels, Dan Aykroyd (who wore a leather jacket over his suit, same as he did at Belushi's funeral), John Goodman, Tom Arnold, Chris Rock, Adam Sandler, George Wendt and Rob Schneider. The funeral program contained the serenity prayer, from AA, and the Clown's prayer (What - that they go away?).

Memorials were planned for Chicago, New York and LA. He is buried in Resurrection Cemetery, in Madison. **Trivia:** Chris's AA sponsor was Tom Arnold.

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STERIOTYPES

An obese slapstick improvisational comedian who made some movies and appeared for several years on "Saturday Night Live" is dead. He died a sordid death attributed to unhealthy living. Belushi admitted to many negative feelings regarding his weight and what kind of roles he was being given. He felt he had been forever type-cast. Before his death in 1982, he was under major pressure to do a movie called "The Joy of Sex" whose scenes included a typical male from birth to death and called for the wearing of an enormous diaper. Why wouldn't a man be troubled over such indignities?

Twenty years later, the cycle repeated itself in the late 90s with Chris Farley, Farley grew up on the same taunts used to haunt his father. "My Father is a big man", the comic told US magazine during that time, "600 pounds maybe more, I worry about him, I love him dearly with all my heart and I see him when he goes to the mall, and the fingers pointing and the laughing and it's ***** tragic! It's terrible to see the fear in his ***** eyes. God ***** it, man he doesn't want to be like that. For Christ's sake, he doesn't want to be that big. People don't understand, and they laugh and they think it's funny but it's very sad for the person afflicted."

Chris Farley too fulfills the stereotype of the fat comedian who used self-deprecating humor and wild buffoonish behavior to gain audiences attention. In one of his TV appearance in 1997, Farley cavorted through a diner pursued by cops on Fox's Mad TV. The laughter flowed as Farley plowed through tray after tray of take out food. Farley was to die as a result of a drug overdose and drinking too. His biography too reveals the dysfunction, the severe struggles with addiction and embarrassment about his weight as well. Too often this story has played itself out, fat comic using humor as a vehicle to hide the years of pain about being fat in today's society, achieving fame but inside feeling the disrespect. It was revealed Chris Farley even said: "I don't want to be the fat guy who falls down anymore."

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THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING BIOGRAPHY

After three years of sobriety, Chris Farley's life was at its creative peak until a string of professional disappointments chased him back to drugs and alcohol. He fought hard against them, but it was a fight he would lose in December 1997. Farley's fans immediately drew parallels between his death and that of his idol, John Belushi. Without looking deeper, however, many failed to see that Farley was much more than just another Hollywood drug overdose. In this officially authorized oral history, Farley's friends and family remember his work and life. Along the way, they tell a remarkable story of boundless energy, determination, and laughter that could only keep the demons at bay for so long.

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Farley's shtick, as expressed in five seasons of *Saturday Night Live* and three No. 1 films, was massively simple: He was the fattest of the fat, loudest of the loud, sweatiest of the sweaty, drunkest of the drunk. His comedy consisted almost exclusively of pratfalls and nudity and shouting. To many, he epitomizes arguably the worst era of SNL: the catchphrase-addicted, innovation-free, post-Myers, pre-Ferrell frat-house nadir of a once-mighty institution. The Farley canon, as he left it when he died in 1997 at age 33, is tiny and tainted: the discordant bellowing of Cindy, his fry-eating Gap Girl; his virtuosically incompetent celebrity interviews on "The Chris Farley Show"; Matt Foley, his supremely unmotivating motivational speaker who lives "in a van down by the river." While even the most skeptical comedy snob must acknowledge, in Farley's best work, glimmers of something great—a mastery of the algorithms of physical comedy so fresh and weird it seems to border on genius (cf. Foley's gyroscopic belt-hitching)—every brilliant move tends to get washed out by lazy waves of thoughtless pandering.

The *Chris Farley Show*—a new biography by Farley's older brother, Tom, and a former biographer of Belushi, Tanner Colby—shows that Farley's simplicity was in fact a tremendously complex construct. The book is subtitled "A Biography in Three Acts." Its opening section covers Farley's first 27 years: boyhood pranks, meteoric professional rise, and—at the first little snort of success—spontaneous combustion into the very worst Behind the Music celebrity-flameout clichés. Farley grew up in a wealthy suburb of Madison, Wisconsin, where he was a local legend from childhood. In church once, on the way to communion, he filled his mouth with white Tic Tacs, fell face-first into a pew, and pretended to spit out all his teeth. In math class he crawled on his belly to the front of the lecture hall, hid behind a curtain, and—just as his teacher, a retired Air Force colonel, was delivering his customary terrible joke to end the session—mooned the class. (Farley's parents were called in, but he wasn't punished because the authorities laughed too hard every time they tried to talk about it.) In college he was famous for his naked beer slides down the bar and for his filthy room, which other students would visit just to marvel at the squalor. But even early on he exhibited the fatal Farley flaw: a tendency to seek approval at all costs. "He was immensely talented," one of his former directors says, "but that talent was at the whim of whoever needed the next laugh." Farley regularly belly flopped over the line between funny and wrong. He was expelled from high school after he exposed his penis, on a dare, to a girl in typing class; in college, he lit a house on fire with a smoke bomb. "He was our windup toy," his older brother says. "You said it. He did it."





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THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING BIOGRAPHY (cont.)

Farley landed on SNL in 1990, where he distinguished himself in just his fourth episode as a male stripper competing with Patrick Swayze. (See here.) But everything went immediately wrong: The drugs got harder, the drinking more destructive. After his first SNL season, Farley made a drunken cameo at Second City, the venerable Chicago theater where he'd come up, and got booed off the stage. His life degenerated into an endless series of interventions, rehabs, and relapses. One of Farley's counselors said his personality was the most addictive he'd ever seen. He started carrying clean urine samples in his pocket, ditched an SNL meeting to buy heroin in Hell's Kitchen, and lunged out a high-rise hotel window, slicing his arm open from shoulder to wrist and nearly falling to his death. Finally, after a stint at a hard-core, prisonlike rehab center in Alabama, Farley reached the blessed oasis of Act Two: three heroic years of sobriety, and the source of almost all his best material.

Like *Live From New York*, another popular recent SNL book, *The Chris Farley Show* is an oral history, patched together out of scraps of interviews with Farley's friends, family, and colleagues. His life is hashed out, piece by piece, by a small army of unreliable narrators, some with obviously self-serving agendas. (David Spade, for instance, is always defending himself, Norm MacDonald criticizing SNL—from which he was fired—and Lorne Michaels advancing his sage persona.) The man himself seems to have existed in a hall of mirrors. Some colleagues (from John Goodman to Jack Handey) insist that the "real" Farley was the bumbling, innocent, awestruck Midwesterner from the SNL sketch "The Chris Farley Show." Others see that as an act: "That whole aw-shucks character ... that was all very deliberate," says one of his *Tommy Boy* co-stars.

It "was a defense mechanism," says Eric Newman, a production assistant. "It protected him, and it made people feel better." When Farley's longtime girlfriend implies that he essentially committed suicide ("He called me late one night and told me why he wasn't going to stay sober anymore, and, at that point, we both knew what that meant"), a chorus of naysayers rises up to cancel her out: "Any idea that Chris wanted to die is bullshit." "You have to discount anything Chris might have said to people, especially to women."

OBESITY

Obesity is a crisis. It's the fastest-growing cause of disease and death in America, and it's completely preventable. The US Surgeon General recently reported that:

- Nearly two out of every three Americans are overweight or obese.
- One out of every eight deaths in America is caused by an illness directly related to obesity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, in this year alone, more than 112,000 Americans will die from illnesses caused by being overweight and obese.

James Gandolfini died of a heart attack this week that was likely a result of his weight. Gandolfini liked to describe himself as "a 260-pound Woody Allen," given that weight, paired with a listed height of 6' 1", he would have had a BMI of 34.3, putting him well into the obese category.





OBESITY (cont.)

When a person experiences a period of sustained obesity, conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol are almost guaranteed. Chris Farley, John Candy, and most recently, James Gandolfini, all died of obesity related causes. Obesity kills more than 112,000 Americans each year, and inspire those who are obese to adopt healthy changes. Chris Farley, sweat pouring down his face, clutched his chest and yelled, "I'm about to have a heart attack!" It was Dec. 14, and Farley, the colossal comic with appetites as oversized as his talent, was at a party in Chicago's hip dance club Karma, drinking heavily, doling out \$50 tips and doing his usual over-the-top comedy bits for fans. The heart attack?

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Just another joke, another attempt to poke fun at himself and score some laughs. Still, says one partygoer, "I wondered if he really was having chest pains. He looked bad." Four days later no one was laughing when tragedy struck Christopher Crosby Farley for real. On Dec. 18, after a bacchanalian final week full of strippers, drugs and alcohol, Farley was found dead in his 60th-floor apartment in Chicago's John Hancock tower. There, his brother John, 29, a Chicago actor, discovered the 5'8", 296-lb. Farley, dressed in sweatpants and an open shirt, sprawled on his back in the foyer. What makes Farley's fate even more poignant is the sense that his self-esteem woes and powerful addictions fueled his comic persona, that of a self-loathing slob who crashed through windows for laughs. "He always said, 'They come to see the fat boy fall down,'" says Second City producer Joyce Sloane, who helped launch Farley's career. "But I don't think he liked being the fat boy. He had all these demons that he just could not fight."

While some friends tried to coddle Chris Farley the alcoholic and drug-addicted comic, who died in 1997. Farley was age 33, and "SNL" honcho Lorne Michaels took a tough-love approach to Farley's many relapses and suspended he many times from the show. "I had been through it with John [Belushi] and I wasn't doing it again." "Sometimes you'd see him with prostitutes. That was mostly at the very end, like when he hosted 'SNL.' The amazing thing was how well he treated them. He'd take them to dinner and treat them so sweetly. He'd introduce them to you as his girlfriend."

Yet the prevailing speculation was that the shocking—though not entirely unexpected—death of Farley, at age 33. "He was obsessed with Belushi," says Farley's former drug counselor Dallas Taylor, who last saw the comic in August, just before Farley was kicked out of a Malibu rehab clinic for disruptive behavior. "Chris thought he needed to be loaded to excess in order to be accepted." A shy kid from Wisconsin who regularly attended mass, including on the last Sunday of his life, Farley recently admitted to US magazine that "lust, gluttony, booze and drugs are most of the things I confess to. I can't help it. I want to be a good Catholic, but I'm a hedonist."

In the last few months those demons snagged Farley in a downward spiral. He was heavier than ever and, at a March SNL cast reunion in Aspen, seemed dangerously out of control. "There was a hyperawareness of what was going on with Chris," says former SNL castmate Al Franken, while another source who was at the Aspen reunion recalls Farley sweating so profusely that SNL alum Jan Hooks, sitting next to him, worried that he was staining her suit.

The last week of his life was one epic binge. On the Sunday before he died, Farley partied into the night at Karma, then, back at his condo, freebased cocaine until 9 a.m. on Monday, according to a fellow reveler. Monday night featured a holiday party followed by more late-night club hopping. "He was partying too much and had no sense of direction," says Chicago Bulls bad boy Dennis Rodman, who ran into Farley that night and had one of his bodyguards help him home. On Tuesday Farley hired an exotic dancer to entertain him at his condo, then hit his favorite after-hours spot, the Hunt Club.





OBESITY (cont.)

Another exotic dancer, Heidi Hauser, told the Globe that she spent most of Wednesday with a sleep-deprived Farley as he consumed large amounts of cocaine, heroin and vodka. Hauser claims she left Farley, passed out on the floor of his foyer, at 3 a.m. on Thursday. It was there that Farley's brother John made his grisly discovery 11 hours later. "Chris played Russian roulette with drugs and alcohol, and it caught up with him," says hairstylist Jillian Seely, a close friend who attended an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting with Farley five days before he died. "He wanted more than anything to be sober, but his addictions overtook him."

Accounts of Farley's dark side are myriad yet matched by stories of his incredible gift for making people laugh. Raised in an upscale section of Madison by Thomas Farley, an oil company owner, and Mary Anne, a housewife, Chris was "always an entertainer," says Joel Maturi, his football coach at Madison's private Edgewood High School. After seeing his father roar with laughter while watching John Belushi in Animal House, Farley knew his destiny. "He wanted to follow in John's footsteps," says Joyce Sloane of Chicago's Second City comedy troupe—Belushi's old stomping grounds—for which Farley was hired in 1987. A brilliant physical comedian who was quickly promoted to Second City's main stage, Farley was also beginning the reckless drinking and drug-taking that would plague him. "There was heavy betting that he wouldn't make it a week on the main stage because of drugs and alcohol," says his former teacher Del Close. "But he could always cut the gig."

In 1990, Michaels snapped up Farley for Saturday Night Live. The following year the producer forced him to enter a drug-rehab clinic. Farley returned to the show three months later but continued indulging his runaway appetites for drugs, booze and food. "It's not easy climbing out of that type of behavior," says Tom Arnold, a longtime friend of Farley's, who has been sober for eight years. In 1992, Arnold staged an intervention for Farley at the Hollywood office of Roseanne, his then wife. Not long after that meeting, Farley checked into Exodus, a rehab clinic in Marina del Rey, Calif. He stayed sober for three years.

But while Farley managed to corral his substance abuse, "he continued to binge on food and hookers," says Dallas Taylor, the former drummer for Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and now an addiction specialist. Actor Jay Mohr recalls sharing meals with Farley and their SNL cohort David Spade. "David used to tease him about putting butter on his steak," says Mohr. "Chris would answer with his typical 'Shut up, David!'" Shortly after the third anniversary of his sobriety, Farley fell off the wagon, and from that point on it was one failed rehab stint after another. Filmmaker Stu Matz recalls one SNL party at which Farley "was snorting coke like a vacuum cleaner."

Farley left SNL in 1995—after creating memorable characters like inspirational speaker Matt Foley—and embarked on a movie career that included roles in Tommy Boy, his first starring part, Black Sheep, Beverly Hills Ninja and the upcoming Almost Heroes, with Matthew Perry. Despite his wealth and fame—Farley earned around \$5 million a film—the comic, says his friend Jeff Michalski, was "undeniably lonely. He never thought he fit in." His father was obese and also an alcoholic. However, he never had an intervention or treatment.

Farley combated his insecurity by always being on, priming his antic behavior with drugs and coffee (he guzzled three cappuccinos before takes on the set of Tommy Boy). Farley's reputation worsened: He had to attend daily AA meetings while filming Almost Heroes and was put under 24-hour watch while recording a voice for the upcoming animated film Shrek. When Farley guest-hosted SNL in October, he arrived for rehearsals drunk and, says Michaels, "way out of shape." Says his friend Seely: "The times he could stay sober were becoming limited."

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OBESITY (cont.)

Yet there were also signs that Farley wanted to get out of the fast lane. In October he talked of getting married and having children and, in December, announced to one of his brothers that he was going to the Hazelden rehab clinic in Center City, Minn., stating, "I cannot stop drinking." (He never followed through.) Farley even bought a Christmas tree on Dec. 12, excitedly telling a worker who helped deliver it, "You made my Christmas so special." It was not to be.

To the authors' credit, they do not pull their punches when it comes to the problems that stifled Farley's potential and eventually killed him. The stories of his epic binges and his countless trips to rehab and back are presented with empathy and context — his father, to whom he was devoted, was an alcoholic who apparently never sought treatment — but without excuses. He too was obese.

CLINICAL MANAGEMENT

What treatments were available for obesity in the 1990's?

What treatments are available today?

What is the role of lifestyle changes?

What is the role of psychosocial and community support systems?

TREATMENT

Current FDA approved pharmacological agents for adjunctive treatment of obesity in addition to lifestyle changes:

| Generic Name | DEA Schedule | Approved Use | Year Approved |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Orlistat | None | Long-term | 1999 |
| Lorcaserin | IV | Long-term | 2012 |
| Topiramate/ phentermine | IV | Long-term | 2012 |

