

# VOICE OF UTAH

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## ['Happy Valley' documentary on Utah County drug use - Wow](#)

I met a man this evening who jumped from the sky last night and was reborn, like aliens. I couldn't understand it, he said, unless I understood mathematics. Nor could I understand why Trax rails don't work, because metal and concrete are like fire and water, and they will get up and walk away. My brother says I'm jumping to conclusions, but I suspect this guy was on something.

What made the encounter noteworthy – other than his declaration, “You look like a politician” – was that I was waiting for the Trax near the downtown library, where I had just attended a screening of “[Happy Valley](#),” a documentary about addiction.

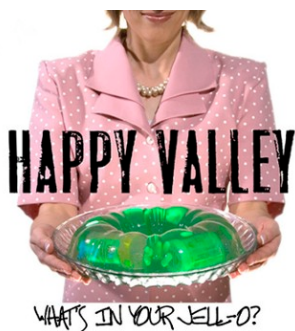
I wasn't sure what I had expected. Something preachy maybe. Something dry. Something amateurish (it is filmmaker Ron Williams' first documentary). Instead, it is hard to describe how affected I was by this film. It has humor – including a laugh-out-loud opening scene in which "Danny" describes his initiation into prescription fraud – and stunning twists and, near the end, one of the most creative mechanisms of expressing inner thoughts that I've ever seen.

This movie does not judge the Utah County kids who died or their parents. As Det. Doug Lambert said before it started, it is about “good people making bad choices” – some horrific. The film also theorizes why Utah is #1 in anti-depressant prescriptions, #1 in prescription drug abuse, and #1 in suicide in every single age category.

The movie is not anti-Church, although if you can't allow yourself to laugh at an addict pretending to buy drugs from “Sister Anderson,” or you don't want to hear why LDS teens think that getting high on painkillers isn't against the Word of Wisdom, you might be uncomfortable at times. Many of the parents and addicts interviewed are active LDS.

Unlike most documentaries, there are actually spoilers for this one, so I can't go into detail about individual stories. I can't even say which of the people whose lives were shattered were at today's screening. **I'll just say this: “Happy Valley”—Don't miss it, and bring Kleenex.**

P.S. Some images can't be improved upon. The Happy Valley ad speaks for itself:



<http://voiceofutah.blogspot.com/2007/08/happy-valley-documentary-on-utah-county.html>