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## The Broken Hero, McMurphy



While the book, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, written by Milos Forman is just as powerful as the film directed by Milos Forman, the film highlights parts that are easily looked over when reading it. Although the meaning behind the film is so moving, it is McMurphy who becomes a tragic hero that makes the film complete.

Unlike the book, the film is shown from McMurphy's point of view. McMurphy represents freedom. McMurphy is the film's hero, but ultimately ends in a tragedy.

When put into the ward, he thought it was a way to get out of going to prison and would be let out when his sentence was up. However, he was wrong. McMurphy became determined to escape the ward so he could become free from Nurse Ratched. He became a leader for the other patients--especially Chief.

His first break for freedom is when he takes other patients from the ward on a fishing trip, "We're going fishing!" (Movie). The patients enjoy hours of laughing and messing



around together--they get a taste of what it would be like if they were able to escape the Ward. Although they ended up back at the Ward after the trip, it started an addiction to freedom within the patients.

When planning his escape, he develops a friendship with Chief. Chief is a man who lost his mind under the influence of others. Although he is so huge in the film, he believes he is small and invisible due to society ripping him away from his culture. McMurphy leads the path to freedom for Chief. Throughout the film, Chief begins to develop confidence and grow-- "I feel as big as a mountain" (movie) as his friendship continues with McMurphy. Chief plans to escape the ward with McMurphy, and as a goodbye party McMurphy sneaks alcohol, cigarettes and women into the ward as a goodbye party before escaping the ward. When caught the next morning, when the nurses officially make McMurphy brain dead; stripping him away from his freedom and determination.

Chief becomes the new leader after he suffocates McMurphy before his escape. This scene proves that although the film ended in such a tragedy, McMurphy accomplished what he was meant to do--give Chief and other patients a life they deserve to live. The scene end with Chief running through the hills to get back to the land where he came from, officially showing his freedom.

McMurphy sacrifices himself for the benefit of the group, and in doing so, he loses his free will. Unfortunately, we will never know if McMurphy was truly sane. One thing that we do know, is McMurphy will go down as one of the most memorable heroic characters in history.



