

A WOUNDED WARRIOR'S CHRISTMAS

by

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A WOUNDED WARRIOR'S CHRISTMAS

FADE IN:

INT. INSIDE CAR - DAY

The family is in the car passing through Dothan, Alabama heading to Panama City Beach FL to spend Thanksgiving with the grandparents. Dad, (37) 6'2 Army Ranger is driving. Mom is Noelle (39) 5'10 Coast Guard Meteorologist on retirement leave. Two children Madison 7 and Jaylen 9 are in the back seat watching a DVD. Jackson sees a road sign signaling 74 miles to Panama City.

JACKSON

Only 74 miles and we see grandma.

Jaylen covers his eyes and exhales. He uses his finger in a pretend gagging motion.

JAYLEN

I'm tired of watching this girly movie. When is it my turn?

To aggravate his sister, Jaylen gets the remote control and hits the mute button on the DVD player hanging from the ceiling.

JAYLEN

Yuck, I don't want to see kissing.

MADISON

Stop it! Turn the volume back up. That's my favorite part of the movie

Noelle is seated in the passenger side and turns around with a stern look. She extends her arm with a finger pointed at him and gives him a stern look. Jaylen exhales loudly and turns the sound back up.

JACKSON

Remember your grandparents are older and I want you to be on your best behavior.

NOELLE

Or else.

MADISON

Tell Jaylen dad, he's always  
messing with me.

JAYLEN

She's such a girl. Why couldn't I  
have a brother instead.

Jackson looks at Noelle and shakes his head. Then looks in  
the rear view mirror at the kids.

NOELLE

You know grandpa is a retired  
Marine, he'll have you guys doing  
push ups if you act out.

JACKSON

Thank goodness they live on the  
beach. You all can run and burn  
off energy. So you won't wear  
them out.

NOELLE

Make sure Ace gets to run around  
too.

Ace, a Jack Russel terrier, hears his name and perks up. He  
walks from the back and stands in between Noelle and Jackson  
wagging his tail. Jackson puts him in a headlock and kisses  
him on the head.

JACKSON

Ace that means you too. Watch your  
step. Remember last time mom...  
had to shew away with the broom.

NOELLE

This is our last Thanksgiving with  
them for a couple of years since  
the Army is moving us to Japan  
this summer.

JAYLEN

Oh yeah buddy! My friend Tyler moved to Japan last year. Can't wait to do BMX biking with him. (Pause) He's a one smart dude.

MADISON

Yeah, if he's so smart, why did he break his arm doing those bike tricks.

Jaylen get angry and balls up his fists.

JAYLEN

You idiot, we were at the skateboard park, not at the BMX track.

Jackson and Noelle in union yell back at him. Noelle quickly turns and glares at Jaylen.

NOELLE

(Angry)  
Jaylen!

JACKSON

Jaylen William Hunter, you apologize right now before I pull this car over.

JAYLEN

...uh Sorry Dad.

JACKSON

Not to me young man, to your sister. I will not have you call her, or anyone that name.

JAYLEN

Sorry Madison.

NOELLE

Hand me your ipad right now. You will not talk to your sister like that. (Pause) Madison you stop aggravating your brother.

Jaylen reluctantly hands the ipad to Noelle, then turns to look out the window pouting and scoots as far away from his sister as possible.

NOELLE

Kids, we know you're tired being  
the car for two days, but...can we  
chill out with the drama?

JACKSON

Settled down now, we're almost  
there.

Noelle leans in and hugs Jackson and kisses him on the cheek. She whispers in his ear and they both laugh. Madison unbuckles her seatbelt and moves close to Noelle and taps her on the shoulder and tries but fails to whisper quietly.

MADISON

I think Ace has to pee mom.

Jaylen looks at Ace and pets him, then looks back at Madison and shakes his head.

JAYLEN

Don't blame it on Ace, when it's  
you who has to go to the bathroom.  
Dad told you to go pee when we  
stopped last time.

MADISON

Well if we stop for Ace, then I  
can go to the bathroom if I want.  
You can't stop me.

JACKSON

Relax guys, we can stop no  
problem. 'Sides I could use a  
coffee.

Jackson pulls into a gas station.

EXT. BEACH NEAR THE PIER - DAY

It's noon the day before Thanksgiving in Panama City Beach, Florida. We see a tall African American male 40ish 6'2, scraggly beard, unkempt afro wearing Air Force sweat shirt and ball cap. He walks gingerly out of the patio door, down the stairs and sits on a beach chair half way to the water.

He stares solemnly at the waves crashing on the shore. Soon an couple in their early 60's walk by with their golden retriever who is off the leash. The dog sees the guy sitting in the beach chair and runs full speed toward the man. He stands up quickly and looks terrified.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. AFGHANISTAN BATTLEFIELD (2013) - DAY

Timothy is wearing full battle gear, carrying a backpack walking through a village in Afghanistan with fellow soldiers. Villagers eye him and his team suspiciously. Suddenly a dog bolts out after him.

TIMOTHY

Watch out for the dog!

Timothy throws some food at the dog who stops and eats it. He exhales visibly. Him and his buddies continue.

BACK TO PRESENT:

The couple run up to Timothy and grab the dog. The dog is wagging his tail and nearly smiling.

BEACH LADY

I'm Meredith and this is my husband William. Sorry Buddy disturbed you, but he was just wanted to say hi.

TIMOTHY

Yeah he scared me for a sec. I'm Timothy

They shake his hand smiling but Timothy barely holds their hand. He does not smile, but instead looks past them.

WILLIAM

Air Force huh? Me too. What was your ASFC?

TIMOTHY

Combat Controller

WILLIAM

Yeah my squadron just started to get you guys in when I retired years ago. I flew C-130s and C5's

Timothy grunts but doesn't encourage further conversation.

WILLIAM

Are you stationed here...at Tyndall Air Force Base?

TIMOTHY

Nope here for R & R, just got back from deployment.

Meridith reads his body language that he wants to be left alone. She takes William's hand and starts walking away.

MEREDITH

Nice to meet you Timothy, sorry again for buddy running up to you

Timothy manages a slight smile and nods.

WILLIAM

Aim High!

William folds his hand in a prayer and holds his clasp hands together and points to the sky with a smile.

INT. INSIDE CAR - DAY

The family arrives in Panama City about to go over the Bay Bridge. As the car drives over the bridge we see sail boats, stand up board riders and fishing boats.

JAYLEN

This is sick! Sick I tell you.

NOELLE

What? You're sick!

MADISON

No mom! It means it's righteous, really cool. Don't you guys know anything?

NOELLE

The things you kids say. But you're right, its beautiful down here.

JAYLEN

Dad can me and Ace go right to the beach? He needs to run around.

NOELLE

Ace and I, not me and Ace. Also can means are you able to and may asks for permission. You're English teacher would be aghast.

Jaylen looks at Madison and rolls his eyes.

JAYLEN

May I take Ace to the beach when we get there?

JACKSON

Sure you can.

Noelle turns to Jackson and frown and slightly shakes her head.

NOELLE

Jack, they haven't seen the kids in a year. They will be so excited to see them. Shouldn't they spend time with them first?

JACKSON

I know mom and dad....and well we need to let them run and burn off all that pent up energy.

NOELLE

Maybe you're right. They are  
wound tighter than a clock.

Jaylen holds up his hand for a high 5 for his sister, who gladly high fives him. They are smiling and looking out the window.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

The grandparents Beach house is on Front Beach Road near Shipwreck Island Water Park and the county fishing pier.

The tourist area is littered with airbrush t-shirt shops, scooter rentals, tattoo shops and snack bars. Many of them are closed for the season and have signs up stating so. People of various ages are walking, running or riding scooters up and down the road. Several stores have doors propped open with clothing on racks outside.

A lady in her early 60's is chopping onions and potatoes and putting into a boiling soup. A man, also in his 60s, has a nearly full trash bag preparing to take it out.

GRANDPA

Pumpkin, got anything else before  
I take the trash out?

GRANDMA

Yes bring it over here so I can  
scoop the onions and tater skins

Grandma wipes the skins into the trash. He cinches up the bag and walks to the door. When the phone on his belt rings, he puts down the trash and answers it.

GRANDPA

Praise the Lord, the kids made it.  
They are just passing by Alvins  
Island Castle.

She puts a top on the boiling soup, turns it down, takes off her apron and walks towards him.

GRANDMA

Perfect. The stew can simmer and  
I'll walk out there with you to  
meet them

They walk out the front door and grandpa puts the trash in  
the bin. Just then the family pulls into the driveway.  
Before they get out the car, Timothy Smith walks from his  
mailbox which is three doors down. Grandma greets him with  
a hello and waves.

GRANDMA

Join us for Thanksgiving dinner  
tomorrow? Say 4pm?

Noelle gets out and hugs grandma and looks to where Timothy  
is walking by. Timothy manages a slight smile and waves but  
keeps walking.

NOELLE

Hi Mom, good to see you. Who is  
that hunka man?

GRANDMA

He just returned from deployment  
and came here to recover. He  
doesn't talk much, just sits and  
stares at the water.

NOELLE

Wow he's really cute. I wonder if  
he's single? My sister Angela  
needs a husband.

GRANDMA

We talked to him on the pier last  
week. He's here alone I know  
that. Not sure if he's married.

Jackson gets out and comes around the car and embraces his  
mother.

JACKSON

Mom don't listen to her, she's  
always up to her match maker  
schemes.

The kids get out of the car and run up and hug the grandparents. Everyone's making small talk and Ace is barking and running around.

GRANDMA

Who wants to hit the beach?

The kids look expectantly at their parents.

JACKSON

Maybe they should help us unload the car and take the stuff to their room.

GRANDPA

Have a heart Jackson. They've been stuck in a seat-belt for two days.

Grandma hugs Jackson again and looks into his eyes.

GRANDMA

It's ok honey, let them play and burn off some energy.

JACKSON

Madison, Jaylen you can go, but don't go past the pier. Stay where we can see you from the patio.

Both kids are smiling and hyped ready to hit the beach.

NOELLE

Keep an eye on Ace.

The kids and Ace run down the beach access wooden walkway to the beach. Everyone else goes into the house.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They are seated on the couch and love seat talking. Noelle gets a coke from the kitchen and brings one to Jackson. After a few minute Jackson gets up and heads to the door.

JACKSON

Hey dad, help me unload the car.

Grandpa goes outside with Jackson.

NOELLE

How's he recovering after hip replacement? I heard that's a long road back.

GRANDMA

Doing great actually. He stayed at the rehab hospital for a week. Then home therapy.

NOELLE

Good. Good. Jack wondered if it was too much on you.

GRANDMA

The doctor said he can return to work in a month.

NOELLE

Nice!

INT. ON THE BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Madison and Jaylen are running and playing on the beach with Ace. They walk past the pier and see a man sitting in the beach chair staring at the water. Ace breaks off and runs past the kids and runs full speed up to Timothy. Timothy looks down at the dog and shakes his head and waves him off. Madison and Jaylen walk up.

JAYLEN

Sorry Mister....but Ace is ok...he doesn't bite.

TIMOTHY

(Gruffly)

He should be on a leash. Dogs are not allowed in this area. (Pause)  
The dog beach is way down there.

Timothy points towards the pier.

MADISON

We didn't know. We're staying at  
grammy's house for a couple days.  
(Pause) We're from Washington DC.  
Have you ever been there?

Timothy is looking past the kids at the water, wanting them  
to leave.

JAYLEN

Sorry, my sister Madison is a  
motor mouth. I'm Jaylen.

TIMOTHY

I'm Sergeant Smith.

MADISON

You're first name's Sergeant?

JAYLEN

Girls are always asking questions  
and being a pest. Let's go.  
(Pause) Have a good one Sergeant  
Smith

Jaylen throws the ball and ACE takes off running after it.  
The kids turn run laughing and yelling leaving Timothy alone  
in the chair. Tears form in his eyes and a single tear  
escapes which he quickly wipes away.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

Jackson and grandpa are sitting on the outside patio  
talking. We see the sun at high noon, blue sky's and  
several people walking along the beach. Camera shows Noelle  
and grandma in the kitchen laughing and dancing. Several  
people are walking or running on the beach. A team is  
playing volleyball.

GRANDPA

How's things going son? When do  
you retire?

JACKSON

Retire in two years. We head to Okinawa Japan in July. After that, we're done.

GRANDPA

Okinawa.....yep yep know the place all too well. I was with the 5th Marine Division there...hahahah fun times. So you come back and retire in DC?

JACKSON

No way dad! DC's traffic's crazy. We're thinking somewhere down south. I want to be close to a military base so we can hit the commissary, PX and base youth activities.

GRANDPA

You passed the Navy base when you went over the bridge. Also Tyndall Air Force Base way across town, near Mexico Beach.

JACKSON

Yeah Noelle and I talked about Tyndall or the Navy Base here.

GRANDPA

Tyndall just got a large contract for F22 Stealth Fighters. I hear it comes with a couple hundred jobs.

The sliding glass door opens and Noelle comes out on the patio.

NOELLE

Honey, where's the kids?

Jackson stands up and walks to the end of the patio looking down the beach.

JACKSON

I see 'em by the peir, I'll call  
them.

We see Madison and Jaylen splashing in and out of the water.  
Jackson uses both fingers in his mouth and makes a loud  
whistle calling the kids.

JACKSON

Jaylen, Madison come on back.

The kids look up and take off running to the house. When  
they get to the bottom of the stairs, it's obvious they are  
wet.

NOELLE

The kids are soaking wet. Did you  
tell them they could get in the  
water?

Jackson looks surprised and then looks at grandpa.

JACKSON

No I sure didn't.

GRANDPA

It's ok we're at the beach.  
Getting wet is half the fun.

NOELLE

It's only 50 degrees outside and I  
can imagine how cold the water  
was.

Jackson stoops down and looks at both of them in the eye.

JACKSON

You were supposed to play in the  
sand, not get in the water.

JAYLEN

Sorry dad but Ace got into the  
surf and I had to go get him out.

Grandma comes to the door with two big towels laughing.

GRANDMA

You guys look like drowned rats.

Noelle takes both towels and throws one at Jackson angrily. She walks up to Madison and puts it over her head and starts drying her. Jackson uses the other towel to start drying off Jaylen and wipes the sand off.

NOELLE

Shower! Now! Both of you.

Noelle extends her arm and points into the house. The kids, wet and sandy walk into the house.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Thanksgiving day inside grandma's house. Its noon and the kids come running inside sandy and breathing heavy. The adults are seated in the den watching the weather channel.

JAYLEN

Grandma, that kid next door is a fast runner. But I almost beat him. His brother tripped and fell so we both beat him. hahaha

Grandma gives Jaylen a high five.

MADISON

Grandma its all boys here. Don't you have any friend's who have girls .....for ME to play with?

Grandma smiles at Madison and touches her on the shoulder.

GRANDPA

I'll see what I can do princess.

NOELLE

Wow that nor'easter storm looks like it could really turn into something dangerous.

JACKSON

Like super storm Sandy that hit  
the New Jersey a couple years ago.  
(Pause) Man I sure hope they  
don't call me back from leave  
early.

GRANDMA

They can't do that can they?

JACKSON

I am on the Emergency Response  
team for the DC area.

MADISON

But daddy, we drove all the way  
down here. Do we have to go right  
back? I want to stay at the beach.

NOELLE

Don't worry about that honey.  
Let's enjoy our Thanksgiving.

JAYLEN

Grammy, I'm hungry when's dinner?

GRANDMA

Dinner's not til 4, but I have  
lunch ready, come and get it.

The kids sit on the bar stools while grandma puts a half  
sandwich, glass of milk and decorated Christmas tree  
cookies. They are both eating watching grandma finish up  
the dinner. Everyone else is in the living room watching  
the storm.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The thanksgiving dinner table is set and grandpa and Jackson  
are helping put food on the table. The football game is  
playing in the background. We hear the doorbell ring and  
everyone stops. Ace is in the dog bed watching.

NOELLE

Expecting somebody?

GRANDMA

I'm hoping its that military guy.  
The one that sits and stares at  
the water. I invited him to join  
us.

MADISON

He's mean. He yelled at us about  
Ace on the beach.

JAYLEN

No he's cool. Madison just kept  
asking him questions.

Jackson walks up to Madison and wipes her hair out her face  
and kisses her on top of the head.

JACKSON

He just got back from deployment.  
He came here to decompress.

MADISON

What's that dad? Decompress.

JAYLEN

It means leave him alone so he can  
relax. He don't want girls  
tacking all the time.

Jackson shoots a warning glance to Jaylen and frowns his  
brows.

JACKSON

War is hard honey. He probably saw  
some things that...uh...

Jackson looks at Noelle helplessly.

NOELLE

He's just tired honey and came to  
the beach to relax.

CUT TO FRONT DOOR

Grandma opens the door to Meredith and William standing smiling with flowers and a fruit basket. Grandma gives them a deadpan look.

MEREDITH

Happy Thanksgiving. (Long Pause)..uh did you forget we were coming.

Grandma breaks her seconds long trance happily greeting them.

GRANDMA

Sorry, Happy Thanksgiving to you! I was hoping it was the military guy... The one who sits at the beach.

She escorts them into the dining room.

GRANDMA

Everybody this is Meredith and William. Meredith is VA a nurse and William is retired Air Force and now flies for the airlines.

Everyone shakes hands and becomes acquainted.

WILLIAM

It's great you invited the military guy Tim. Seems like he needs friends around him.

GRANDMA

If he doesn't come over, we will take him a plate later.

NOELLE

The table is all set, let's eat.

GRANDPA

Everyone please join hands as we Thank God for this beautiful meal, family and friends.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

It's 10pm and the kids are asleep. Everyone else is in the living room watching the tail end of the NFL game.

GRANDPA

Good game, the Cowboys managed a win...yet again.

JACKSON

Flip to the weather channel. I got a weather alert on my cell. Want to see what's happening.

He turns to the weather channel. The doppler shows a massive cold front heading to the east coast. They watch it for a few minutes. Then Jackson's phone rings. He looks around then flips the couch cushions until he finds and answers it.

JACKSON

Yes this is Master Sergeant Hunter. Whose this?

He listens a few seconds and his face is crestfallen and shakes his head in disbelief.

JACKSON

Roger, I understand. But sir my family.....we drove to Florida, it would take me at least two days to.....

He looks frantically for paper and pen. After he finds it he writes down information.

JACKSON

Yes sir, just email me the itinerary. I can pull it up on my phone.

NOELLE

What's up honey?

Jackson mouths "I gotta go back to DC"

JACKSON

Roger, goodnight sir. (Pause) Can you have Sergeant Hernandez pick me up at.... ok goodnight.

Jackson throws his cell phone on the couch in disgusts.

JACKSON

The storm is projected to be really bad, so I gotta go back to DC.

GRANDMA

Son, I'm so sorry. Any idea how long?

JACKSON

No, they didn't say. But hopefully it's a precautionary measure. Maybe it will churn back out to sea and I can come back in a couple days.

Noelle walks over and hugs Jackson and rubs his forehead.

NOELLE

We love you honey, we understand.

We hear a phone ringing. Jackson looks at his phone and its not his ringing. Noelle feels the vibration and pulls it out of her bath robe and answers it.

NOELLE

Hello? (Pause) Yes this is Lieutenant Commander Hunter.

She listens and the smile disappears as she sits down and starts writing on a tablet.

NOELLE

But I'm on 90 days terminal leave, I retire March 1.

She continues to listen and shakes her head. Jackson walks over and puts his hands her shoulders.

NOELLE

(Angry)

Yeah my husband got the same MAC flight information. Yes! I said Yes! Ok bye.

JACKSON

You too honey?

Noelle nods and continues to scribble on the paper aimlessly.

GRANDPA

They can't call make you both come back...can they? What would have happened if you were in DC? What would you do with the kids?

NOELLE

We have what they call a family care plan because we are subject to recall for emergencies.

Grandma goes to hug Jackson and waves Noelle and grandpa over and makes a group hug.

GRANDMA

Thanks for your service to this great country, both of you.  
(Pause) We'd love to have the kids stay.

GRANDPA

Punkin's right. You go help with the storm. The kids will be fine here.

JACKSON

Goodnight dad...mom.

NOELLE

We will tell the kids in the morning.

GRANDPA

Jaylen will be glad to miss school. Madison, I'm not so sure.

GRANDMA

What time do you fly out in the morning?

JACKSON

We're catching a military hop, MAC flight out of Tyndall Air Force Base at 10am.

They walk towards the bedroom and Jackson puts one arm around her and kisses her

INT. MILITARY FLIGHT TERMINAL - MORNING

Camera shows a military flight terminal with military personnel in uniform and gear milling about. Several civilians including a mom with 2 kids seated across from the family. Noelle is in her Coast Guard dress uniform with badges and ribbons, wearing gold stud earrings. Jackson is in his Army dress uniform with maroon beret, ranger tab and jump boots looking sharp.

FLIGHT ANNOUNCER (VO)

All personnel on the flight to Dover Delaware please proceed to the departure gate. Military personnel must be in uniform with orders and ID available. Civilians and family members please have appropriate documentation available.

NOELLE

That's us.

Noelle and Jackson stand up check their paperwork and hug everyone. Jaylen is upset and fighting back tears. Madison is smiling hugging daddy.

JACKSON

Kids you mind them alright? They have our permission to punish you...old school style.

GRANDPA

Yeah, I'll make 'em do push ups. Marine Corps style... hahahah

Grandma stands with her hands on her hips with righteous indignation with a slight smile.

GRANDMA

You will not! Those are my babies.

Noelle makes eye contact with Jaylen as he is struggling to keep from crying. She grabs and hugs him.

NOELLE

Son this is only for a couple of days to help with the storm.  
(Pause) We'll fly back...hopefully by next week.

JAYLEN

The Army doesn't care about us kids. They don't care, you guys are always gone. I'll never join the Army never never.....

Jaylen runs over to another set of seats and sits by himself with his back to everyone. Grandpa waves everyone over and they walk and form a prayer circle around Jaylen.

Noelle and Jackson both walk off holding hands to the departure gate. The both turn back and mouth "I love you" and walk out the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Grandparents and kids are trimming the tree. Christmas music can be heard and a plate of gingerbread cookies and a red velvet cake are on the counter. On the floor is a mess of wrapping paper, tape, scissors and wrapped presents.

JAYLEN

Grandpa when is mom and dad coming back? They said it would be a week...and it's been two weeks.

GRANDPA

Remember we watched the news this morning. DC is covered in snow, schools are closed...people have no electricity. Your mom and dad are helping people.

Madison inhales loudly and rolls her eyes impatiently.

MADISON

We talk to mom and dad every day and we Skype too. It's not so bad, we're at the beach.

Madison grabs a gingerbread cookie and eats it and drinks a glass of milk. She hands a cookie to Jaylen but he shakes his head.

JAYLEN

Dad said when he got back from Afghanistan that this time.....we would spend the Christmas together.

Grandma pulls him over to the couch next to her and hugs him in silence.

GRANDMA

They will be back soon, as soon as the commanders up there...let them go.

GRANDPA

Thousands have no heat..or power. Thank God you guys are down here.

Grandma flips on the TV and the weather channel is on. It shows the devastation of the blizzard conditions in DC. The reporter throws to a press conference in which Noelle is answering questions on the storm aftermath.

JAYLEN

There's mom! There's mom! She's famous, she's on TV

Both kids run to the TV almost put their face on it.

MADISON

I can't believe it, my mom's on TV. This goes on instagram.

Madison takes several picture of the TV, then takes a selfie with mom in the background.

REPORTER 1

Lieutenant Commander Hunter, is it true the storm is still spinning out in the Atlantic and may make a second landfall? Creating the unthinkable, a second blizzard?

NOELLE

That's premature to say the least. We are watching the trajectory and tracking the storm closely.

REPORTER 2

Commander Hunter, isn't your husband also on the emergency response team?

NOELLE

Yes, why you ask? Did something happen to him?

REPORTER 2

He's fine. I saw him early this morning on a large crane clearing wrecked cars. (Pause) He told me if I saw you at the news conference to tell "wifey" he sends love from the snowbanks.

Several in the room laugh.

NOELLE

Yes, that sounds like him alright.

REPORTER 2

How are your children holding out, in this storm? Must be difficult for them with mom and dad working the blizzard recovery.

NOELLE

Actually our children are in Panama City Beach, Florida right now with their grandparents.

REPORTER 1

Tough life.

REPORTER 2

Fighting the sun and surf, must be difficult for them.

Room chuckles.

Noelle faces the camera smiling.

NOELLE

I want to send my love to my children JAYLEN and MADISON. Love you guys, see you soon!

Grandpa looks over and see's tears are streaming down Jaylen's face. He runs to his room and shuts the door.

EXT. FISHING PIER - DAY

Timothy is wearing a camouflage Air Force Jacket, blue jeans and military boots. His pole is bent and he is reeling, leaning back attempting to bring the fish in. Grandpa and Jaylen are walking on the pier and stop just as Timothy brings the fish over the rails and it flops around. Jaylen runs over and smiles as he watches the fish. It's long lean, sliver with gold spots and a pointed snout with jagged teeth.

JAYLEN

Cool, what kinda fish is that?

TIMOTHY  
Spanish Mackerel

Grandpa nods his chin at Timothy and he responds with a chin nod.

JAYLEN  
Can I take it off the hook? My dad lets me.

TIMOTHY  
'Aight Kid.

Timothy hands Jaylen a pair of needle nose pliers which he uses to take the fish off the hook. He finally gets the fish off the hook and it flips out of his hand and lands back on the pier. Several passersby laugh. Jaylen is finally able to pick it up with both hands.

TIMOTHY  
Throw it back. It's too small to keep.

JAYLEN  
Ok Sarge.

Jaylen walks to the railings of the pier and tosses the fish back. He smells his hands then wipes them on his pants. Grandpa smiles and nods at Timothy. He sticks his hands out and shakes Timothy's hand.

GRANDPA  
I'm Bill.

TIMOTHY  
Sergeant Smith....uh Timothy

JAYLEN  
He knows me, I met him the day we got here

GRANDPA  
My grandson loves to fish. His dad, had to go back to DC for the snow storm, so he's hanging out with us.

JAYLEN

Can I cast the line back out? I  
wont mess it up...promise.

TIMOTHY

"Aight. Go ahead. (Pause) Watch  
behind you.

He hands the fishing pole to a smiling Jaylen who reels back then tosses the line into the water. He squeals in victory as the line hits the water.

GRANDPA

Ok give it back now. That's an  
expensive rig... don't want you  
tangling the line.

TIMOTHY

It's ok, he can make a few casts.

They stand there quietly looking into the horizon when Jaylen's pole bends violently and he screams with delight.

JAYLEN

I got one!

INT. BEACH HOUSE - EVENING

The kids are lounging in the living room. Grandpa is cleaning up the kitchen. Grandma comes downstairs with a towel and washcloth.

GRANDMA

Madison, your bath is all set. I  
put those Dora the Explorer  
bubbles you like.

Madison jumps up excitedly and grabs her toys.

MADISON

Thanks grammy! Those bubbles  
smell sooooo good! (Pause) Is it  
ok if I turn the lights off and  
use my special lantern we got  
today?

GRANDMA

Of course honey. Jaylen, you take a shower downstairs.

JAYLEN

Dang grandma, I took a shower...just yesterday. Why do I have to take one again.

GRANDPA

Young man, you do what your grandma says now. You helped Timothy clean fish...uh and you smell.

MADISON

Yeah, you smell horrible, like fish heads. Pew weeeee!

Madison holds her nose and shakes her head taunting Jaylen. She laughs, takes the towel from grandma and dances a jig as she goes upstairs.

JAYLEN

You always wear that stinky girl junk and smell like Skittles.

Grandma shoots a warning glance and shakes her finger at Jaylen. Jaylen gets up and goes walks towards the garage door.

GRANDPA

Young man, that's not the way to the shower.

JAYLEN

Jus' going to the garage to make sure I put away the fishing gear.

GRANDPA

Alright, but no stalling. Shower and then bed...ok?

INT. BEACH HOUSE-LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Things are quiet, grandparents are snuggling on the couch and the kids are taking baths.

MADISON

(Screaming)

No! Aruuuggg!! OH my God!!

The grandparents scramble off the couch and race upstairs. Grandma runs into the bathroom and sees a dripping wet Madison with the robe on. She is livid as she runs past grandma.

GRANDPA

Madison, what's wrong.

MADISON

Just look....uh...in the bathtub.

They pull the shower curtain back and see a fish head floating in the soap bubbles. Grandpa starts laughing and hugs grandma in relief. Grandma pushes his hug away with a frown.

GRANDMA

Jaylen! Get in here.

Grandpa picks up the fish head out the bath tub with a smile and puts it in the trash can liner and cinches it up.

INT. BEACH HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The laptop is on the kitchen table and Jackson is speaking to Jaylen on skype. Jaylen is doing push ups and counting out loud.

JAYLEN

Eleven, twelve,...uh..I'm  
tired...thirteen...uh...ahhhh

JACKSON (V.O)

Keep doing push ups, all 20 of them. I can't believe you are doing this to your grandparents.  
(Pause) Just wait 'til I see you.

Noelle's voice can be heard chastising Jaylen as well.

NOELLE (V.O.)

You are grounded tomorrow, meaning you stay inside all day.

Jaylen collapses on the floor breathing heavily.

JAYLEN

(Pleading)

But mom....dad...me and Sergeant Smith are supposed to do the beach clean up with the Boy Scouts. They're having a BBQ afterwards.

GRANDPA

Jackson, we did sign the kids up for the beach clean up. It's ok with us if they go.

JACKSON (V.O.)

Dad! Jaylen needs to learn a lesson. He is grounded all day tomorrow. I will call before bedtime to see how he did.

Grandpa looks at a pleading Jaylen and puts his hand around him.

GRANDPA

Jaylen son, you dad is right. Madison could have slipped on the wet floor and hurt herself. She could have broken an arm or leg.

NOELLE (V.O.)

He can do any chores you have. Also no electronic devices ....at all.

JACKSON

He will write a 2 page essay on ways he can deal with his anger.

GRANDMA

Sorry to call you guys so late....but well we wanted you to talk to him.

JACKSON (V.O.)

Thanks for calling, we needed to know. You shouldn't have any more problems like that. (Pause) Right Jaylen?

JAYLEN

Yeah dad.

GRANDMA

Go shower and get in bed.

Jaylen stands up sweating and walks away without saying goodnight.

INT. SERGEANT SMITH'S CONDO - DAY

Timothy is lying on the couch. The floor is littered with fast food containers and soda cans. He uses his cell phone to make a call.

PHONE CONVERSATION STARTS

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Stop calling, I told you I don't have anything to say to you.

TIMOTHY

I'm down here all alone. I just got back from deployment and my own wife wont even spend time with me.

FEMALE VOICE (VO)

No. I'm not coming down there.

TIMOTHY

So, just like that? What about my boys, they need me.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

I'm not going to argue. You can call later and talk to the boys, but I'm done talking.

TIMOTHY

Are you serious?

PHONE CONVERSATION ENDS

Timothy is furious and kicks empty bags of food and soda cans. He picks up two throw pillows and kicks them across the room. He sits on the couch, yells, and starts tearing up.

TIMOTHY

I can't believe this, I serve my country and help others...and this is what I get? Spending Christmas alone?

The doorbell rings, then a knock at the door. He goes to the door but doesn't open it.

TIMOTHY

Who is it? What do you want?

JAYLEN

Sergeant Smith, it's Jaylen. You wanna play football?

Timothy leans with his back against the door exhales and wipes away tears. Jaylen is talking to the door and Timothy answering from inside. He does not open the door.

TIMOTHY

No kid. I'm taking a nap.

JAYLEN

I heard you yelling. Are you ok? Want me to get grandpa?

TIMOTHY

No....I'm fine. I....I uh kicked my toe on the couch.

JAYLEN

Sorry I didn't come over yesterday....I was ...on uh..punishment. (Pause) Hope you're not mad at me.

TIMOTHY

Nope.

JAYLEN

Did ya have fun with the beach clean up? (Pause) I could hear the music...but...I couldn't come out.

TIMOTHY

Yeah Madison told me what you did to her. Not cool at all.

Jackson doesn't say anything else. Jaylen is visibly disappointed.

JAYLEN

Ok, see ya tomorrow.

TIMOTHY

Yeah.

Timothy still has his back to the door. He slides down the door until he's sitting on the floor. He buries his head in his hands.

INT. BEACH BY THE PIER - AFTERNOON

Jaylen and Madison are running down the beach chasing Ace and throwing a ball. They come upon Timothy who is building a sandcastle. He is waist deep in the sand. He has a flash back of building protective barriers in the deserts of Afghanistan.

FLASHBACK TO: DESERTS IN AFGHANISTAN

Timothy and two males are digging a sand berm around their tent. Both are dirty, sweaty, exhausted and haggard. They have their uniform outer top off and are just wearing army pants, tshirts and boots.

TIMOTHY

We're almost done. Then we can hit the showers and get some chow.

SOLDIER

Why build the trench around the tent? Don't make sense.

TIMOTHY

Rainwater will run into the trench, hopefully keeping it out the tent. (Pause) Also if a grenade is thrown at the tent...hopefully it will roll in.

FLASHBACK ENDS

JAYLEN

Sergeant Smith, what you making?

Timothy is suddenly aware of Jaylen and Madison.

TIMOTHY

A nativity scene for the contest tomorrow.

MADISON

You can't make a nativity scene in the sand...can you?

TIMOTHY

I'ma try.

Timothy continues scooping, stacking and forming his sculptures. Both kids watch him for a few seconds. Madison gets bored and starts walking away.

MADISON

I'm going to get some hot chocolate. You coming?

JAYLEN

Nope.

Madison walks off with Ace.

JAYLEN

Is it ok if I stay and help? I  
promise not to talk a lot or ask a  
lot of questions.

Timothy grunts, shrugs his shoulders and nods. He hands  
Jaylen a bucket.

TIMOTHY

Go get me some water.

Jaylen stands up grinning excitedly salutes him.

JAYLEN

Yes Sir!

TIMOTHY

Don't call me sir, I'm enlisted, I  
work for a living.

Jaylen laughs and takes off with the bucket running to the  
water.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - EVENING

Everyone is seated at the table eating dinner.

JAYLEN

Grandpa, Sergeant Smith let me  
help him make the Nativity Scene  
sand castle. Take a look.

Jaylen excitedly scrolls through the photos in his iphone.  
He passes the phone around the table.

GRANDPA

It looks fantastic! But I hope  
you're not wearing out your  
welcome.

JAYLEN

No grandma, he needs me. He can't run get a buckets of water fast like I can. (Pause) His back got hurt in the....in the ...war

MADISON

Where is his wife and kids?

JAYLEN

Nashville.

MADISON

Did they get a divorce?

GRANDMA

Could be a million reasons. It's not nice to pry into people's personal lives.

JAYLEN

Nosey marosy, none of your business.

Grandma picks up Jaylens hand and smiles warmly and pats it softly.

GRANDMA

It's great you're helping him.

JAYLEN

We're gonna win the contest...I just know it.

Grandpa's cell phone rings and he answers it. He talks for a few seconds then pulls the phone away to talk.

GRANDPA

Hey kids, mom and dad are on skype. Let's go to the computer room so we can talk.

The quickly leave the table and run full speed into the computer room

INT. KIDS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Grandpa is tucking both kids in the bed. Jaylen is in the top bunk with his spy glasses on reading a comic book. Madison is on the bottom with her Ipod playing music.

MADISON

It was so cool to Skype with mom  
and dad.

JAYLEN

Mom said they will let her come  
back in a couple of days. Not  
sure about Dad.

MADISON

How many days before Christmas?

GRANDPA

Six days my little pumpkin til  
Santa comes down the chimney

Madison rolls her eyes then covers them with her hands and exhales sarcastically.

MADISON

Grandpa.....there's no Santa

GRANDPA

Who says so? Look at me I believe  
in Santa and the spirit of  
Christmas

Madison rolls on her tummy and laughs in her pillow. She turns back over smiling benevolently at grandpa.

MADISON

Ok grandpa.

JAYLEN

Me and Sergeant Smith are  
volunteering at the Toys for Tots  
tomorrow at Pier Park. (Pause)  
That is if you will take me. He's  
riding his motorcycle

GRANDPA

Sounds good. Now go to bed,  
you've had a busy day.

The kids turns over and pull the covers up as grandpa turns the light out and walks out.

INT. BEACH HOUSE-KITCHEN - MORNING

Grandpa and Madison are fixing breakfast. Madison is setting the table and grandpa is putting the food in the serving dishes on the counter.

GRANDPA

Thanks for helping me with  
breakfast.

MADISON

You're welcome grandpa. Dad loves  
to cook stuff with me. He showed  
me how to make my famous cheddar  
biscuits.

GRANDPA

Good girl!

MADISON

I like to follow recipes..lots of  
stuff in the kitchen. My science  
teacher says cooking is...like  
chemistry.

GRANDPA

Yeah?

MADISON

Mrs. Jenkins calls it kitchen  
chemistry.

GRANDPA

Mmmmmm

Grandpa puts the blueberry muffins in the wicker basket. He takes a bit of one with a big smile.

GRANDPA

Blueberries....yum! Great idea to use fresh berries instead of canned.

Grandma comes downstairs.

GRANDMA

Where's Jaylen? Breakfast is ready.

GRANDPA

He took out the trash, should be right back.

The door knob is jiggled and after a second a knock at the door. Grandma goes to the door and opens it with a smile.

GRANDMA

No thank you, I don't want to buy any Boy Scout cookies.

JAYLEN

(exhales loudly)

Grandma.

Smoke is eddying up from the toaster oven.

JAYLEN

Smells smoky in here. Madison are you burning stuff again?

Grandpa sees small flames shooting up from the toaster. He jumps up and runs to the fire extinguisher and sprays the toaster. He then uses the broom to unplug it from the wall. Everyone is startled and scared.

GRANDMA

Honey be careful! Kids get back!

Everyone stands with mouths gaping open. The white extinguisher powder has gotten on all of the food, counter and wall.

MADISON

Wow grandpa. I've never seen....a  
fire in the house....oohhh

Jaylen is in awe and smiling at grandpa and gives him a high  
5.

JAYLEN

Good job grandpa. Just like in  
the fire safety videos they show  
at school.

Grandpa inspects the damage, picking up the burned cord with  
the broom handle.

GRANDPA

Looks like an electric short. I  
guess we should have replaced it,  
instead of just fixing the cord.

Grandma looks at the mess in the kitchen and then looks at  
the kids.

GRANDMA

Well.....looks like Waffle House  
for breakfast.

EXT. PIER PARK- PANAMA CITY BEACH - DAY

Pier Park is a large outdoor mall with over 150 stores  
restaurants and activities. The blue green water can be  
seen in a distance. The grandparents, kids along with  
Timothy Smith are at a Toy's for Tots tent. They are  
accepting donations as well as giving out gift bags to  
registered parents.

JAYLEN

Only two families left to pick up  
presents.

TIMOTHY

Yep, we're almost done.

JAYLEN

This is fun, helping kids who don't have much.

TIMOTHY

Yes, we should be thankful for whatever we have. Some of these children wouldn't get any gifts without this program.

Grandma walks over and puts her arm around Timothy and smiles.

GRANDMA

Join us for dinner tonight? The kids are helping to fix a traditional southern meal, turnip greens, fried chicken, mac & cheese.

MADISON

...and I am making cheddar bay biscuits like they have at Red Lobster. Daddy loves them!

JAYLEN

Then me and my grandpa are making s'mores on the patio grill after dinner.

MADISON

You act like he's only your grandpa, he's mine too. I can have s'mores too...can't I grandpa?

GRANDPA

Of course you can you're my princess.

TIMOTHY

Ma'am I don't want to impose. My mom always taught me not to...

Grandma stars at him with a stern look and her hands on her hips.

GRANDMA

Nonsense Soldier you will report  
to our house this evening at 6pm.  
Is that understood?

Jaylen rolls his eyes and exhales quickly tries to interpose  
between grandma and Timothy.

JAYLEN

Grammy, he's in the Air Force...he's  
an Airman not a Soldier.

TIMOTHY

It's ok kid. An Airman or  
Soldier, we are all warriors to  
keep America free.(pause) Thanks  
ma'am I'll be there.

GRANDMA

Good see you at 6pm sharp!

JAYLEN

Good! He can sit with me and  
grandpa.

Timothy grabs Jaylen and gives him a headlock hug and uses  
his fist to rub over the top of his head.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - EVENING

Everyone is seated around the table. They have finished  
with dinner and are playing scrabble. Timothy is opening up  
and talking more about himself. Grandpa is sipping coffee  
grandma puts out freshly baked muffins.

JAYLEN

My dad is good at scrabble. But I  
beat him a couple times.

Madison snickers sarcastically.

MADISON

Please,...dude.. dad let you win.  
You didn't really beat him.

JAYLEN

Shut up.

GRANDPA

Jaylen, watch your language.

JAYLEN

Make her leave me alone. Sergeant Smith is my friend....not hers. Why cant she go in her room and play with dolls or something.

GRANDPA

Madison.....cool it ok?

Timothy tries to redirect the conversation to ease tensions.

TIMOTHY

You guys have taught me new Q, Z and X words tonight. I didn't know you could make so many Q words without the letter U.

MADISON

Mom is OCD about the English language. She will correct you in a minute. She's always making us learn words, even if we are just having fun.

JAYLEN

Yeah, and she will make you look something up in a dictionary...the old kind..the paper book one. She wont let us use the online dictionary.

Grandma walks over with a plastic container full of food. Along with several biscuits in a ziplock bag

GRANDMA

Here, take this back with you. We always have more than we enough.

Timothy stands up and bows his head in thanks.

TIMOTHY

Thank you kindly ma'am. Glad for home cooked meals, been eating fast food lately.

He rubs his stomach with a slight smile.

TIMOTHY

Madison your biscuits were better than the ones at red lobster.

MADISON

They were some of my best ones. I can make you some tomorrow if you come over again.

TIMOTHY

Mmmmmmmmm

Madison is smirking at Jaylen who is quickly becoming defensive and protective of Timothy.

JAYLEN

I helped grandma season and batter the chicken. And I made the mac & cheese....all by myself.

Timothy pulls both of them to him and hugs them on his side.

TIMOTHY

Everything was great! Even better than my mom's. But dont tell her.

JAYLEN

We won't tell, promise.

Timothy looks at his watch in surprise.

TIMOTHY

Oh wow guys, its past 9pm. I gotta be going.

JAYLEN

Grandpa he don't have to go now does he? We don't have school.

GRANDPA

He's been kind enough to spend  
time with us today. He's probably  
tired.

The kids exhale and whine.

TIMOTHY

Thank you sir ma'am for a great  
dinner. I had a great time. Makes  
me miss my family.....

Timothy stops in mid sentence. He gathers his coat and gets  
the tupperware containers.

GRANDMA

Glad you enjoyed it. You're  
welcome anytime.

They walk him to the door and just before he steps out, he  
reaches into his pocket and hands grandma a wrapped gift.

TIMOTHY

Almost forgot....Hope you like it.

GRANDMA

I'm sure I will.

Timothy calls Jaylen over, stoops down and talks to him.

TIMOTHY

I want you to be a big brother to  
Madison...alright? No more pranks  
...like with the fish. ok?

JAYLEN

But Sergeant Smith she said I  
smelled like dead fish....she wont  
leave me alone.

TIMOTHY

Listen, if you want to hang out  
with me.....you must respect  
girls..ok?

JAYLEN

Why couldn't I have a brother.....

TIMOTHY

In Afghanistan we were helping people, but they didn't like us. They said mean things and stole from us. But I still respected them, no matter what.

JAYLEN

Really?

TIMOTHY

Yes. But after a while they got to know us and treated us better. They even invited us to tea and bread.

JAYLEN

Yeah we studied some of the middle east cultures and stuff in history class.

TIMOTHY

Ok I gotta go now, but listen to me, I don't want to hear about you fighting with your sister anymore.....got me?

Jaylen smiles, stands at attention and salutes him with a smile.

JAYLEN

Aye Aye Sergeant!

He gives Jaylen a fist bump and man hug. Timothy leaves and they shut the door.

GRANDPA

Nice young man. Too bad he's spending Christmas alone.

GRANDMA

Ok everybody, time for bed.

The kids moan in disapproval.

EXT. BEACH BY THE PIER - DAY

Scene opens at the beach near the county pier. A bright red tent with flags waving in the wind and a big sign saying "Sandcastle contest" Several people are hurriedly finishing up their sand castles as judges with khaki slacks, red polo shirts and clipboards walk around. The media is there with a news truck and reporters interviewing contestants.

Timothy and Jaylen are putting the finishing touches on their Nativity Scene. The grandparents and Madison are walking around looking at the entries.

SANDCASTLE JUDGE

(Loud speaker)

Judging starts in 30 minutes. When the horn sounds, please stop working and come to the judging area.

Camera shows sand sculptures of Snowmen, A Mermaid Santa, a Grinch and Timothy's Manger Scene.

JAYLEN

The Grinch is really cool...but ours is the best. The Wise Men and the baby Jesus...that's what Christmas is about.

TIMOTHY

Yep, Jesus is the reason for the season.

Jaylen is looking proud of himself. Then starts to rub his chin in contemplation.

JAYLEN

We just need a north star.

He sits on the sand and continues thinking.

JAYLEN

Oh I know, sparklers! Ya got any?

TIMOTHY

Yeah, there's some in the condo. I guess from the last family who rented it.

JAYLEN

We can put a lighted sparkler over the barn! So the wise men and find it. It's perfect!

Timothy takes off walking fast as the grandparents and Madison walk up.

MADISON

Where's he going? The judging is in 15 minutes.

Jaylen is beside himself with joy and excitement about the sandcastle they built. He is finishing up some of the sculptures and cleaning up buckets and papers.

JAYLEN

I had a great idea, and Sergeant Smith went to the house to get it. But I can't tell you...it's a surprise.

EXT. BEACH BY THE PIER - MOMENTS LATER

All contestants are standing under the red tent waiting on final judging. Judges are comparing notes, looking at photos on the ipad. Others are milling about talking with the news media. A Santa and several elves are under the tent taking photos with the kids.

A LOUD HORN SOUNDS.

SANDCASTLE JUDGE

(Loud Speaker)

Thanks to all the teams for their excellent work. Our first annual Christmas in the sand is a huge success. We raised \$5,000 for

(MORE)

SANDCASTLE JUDGE (cont'd)  
 "Beach Services" charity.

Applause from the crowd.

SANDCASTLE JUDGE  
 Ok the 3rd place goes to the  
 Mermaid Santa done by the Goldman  
 family from New York.

Loud cheering and clapping is heard as the Goldman family,  
 dad, mom and 3 children walk up to get the trophy. The  
 family thanks everyone and departs.

SANDCASTLE JUDGE  
 The 2nd place winner is the Grinch  
 and his sleigh of stolen presents  
 by the Sailors from Navy base.

Three navy sailors, two male and one female clap in unison.  
 They are wearing bright yellow hoodies with Dive Navy  
 emblazoned on them and blue bandannas.

NAVY GUYS  
 Go Navy! Go Navy! Accelerate Your  
 life!

Everyone claps, woos and laughs as the Sailors walk to the  
 podium to accept their prize.

Jaylen whispers to Timothy with a hopeful smile

JAYLEN  
 I just know we're gonna win cause  
 ours is the best

Timothy puts both hands on Jaylen looking him in the eye.

TIMOTHY  
 You did a good job. We're winners  
 no matter what.

SANDCASTLE JUDGE  
 The judges were unanimous in this  
 selection. The Manger Scene by  
 Timothy Smith and his son Jaylen  
 wins first place. The sparklers  
 (MORE)

SANDCASTLE JUDGE (cont'd)  
and the Jaylen playing the  
drum...was just great.

Roaring clapping and hooping runs through the crowd as Jaylen and Timothy walk to the podium. The announcer hands Timothy the microphone.

TIMOTHY  
Thanks everyone it was really fun.  
Although Jaylen is not my son, he  
is great young man. His parents  
are in the military helping with  
the DC blizzard.

Timothy hands the mic to Jaylen.

JAYLEN  
Sergeant Smith is a cool guy, just  
like my dad. Thanks for voting us  
#1.

The judge hands the trophy to Timothy who quickly hands it to Jaylen. The grandparents and Madison come up to congratulate them.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Everyone is in the computer room on the Skype talking to Mom and Dad. The camera shows mom and dad together on the webcam displayed on a large 28 inch tv monitor.

NOELLE  
Morning guys. We wanted to catch  
you before you went outside to  
play.

MADISON  
Me and grandma got manicures and  
pedicures today. See my zebra  
stripes.

Madison holds up her nails which are black and white. She then puts her feet close to the webcam to try to show them.

NOELLE

Grandma and I, not me and grandma.  
Come on missy, you know the  
proper English.

Madison rolls her eyes for a second and exhales. Then resumes smiling excitedly.

MADISON

Ok mom, Grandma and I.

NOELLE

It looks fabulous! Add it to my  
instagram account...want my  
friends at work to see it.

MADISON

Grandma got a French manicure. She  
didn't want the zebra stripes.  
Daddy what do you think?

JACKSON

Princess you look fantastic! I  
miss you so much, can't wait to  
hug you. Will you make your  
favorite biscuits for us?

MADISON

Sure dad. Sergeant Smith loved  
them too, he took some home.

JACKSON

Biscuits sounds great right about  
now.

MADISON

Oh, mom dad. I gotta to the  
bathroom.

Madison scampers off. Jaylen gets in front of the webcam and shows the trophy to mom and dad.

JACKSON

Son I am so proud of you winning  
that sandcastle contest. We need  
to build you a trophy case at  
home. Because you will get more

(MORE)

JACKSON (cont'd)

trophies.

JAYLEN

Dad we also won the top prize of \$200. Sergeant Smith, he...split it with me. See the \$100 bill he gave me?

Jaylen waves the \$100 bill in front of the webcam. He spins around and pumps his arm in victory.

NOELLE

We love you guys and we will be there tomorrow. We still have two shopping days before Christmas.

Madison comes back in the room. Jaylen waves the \$100 bill in front of Madison and drags it across the top of her head and down her face.

MADISON

Mom, dad .... Jaylen wont share the money with me.

JAYLEN

I earned that money working with Sergeant Smith. Madison didn't help. Why do I have to share?

JACKSON

Your brother's right. He earned that money and he can do whatever he wants with it.

NOELLE

Jaylen, I expect you save half of that money...ok?

JAYLEN

Ok mom. Na na na na Madison, I don't have to share.

Noelle folds her arms, exhales loudly and frowns slightly at Jaylen.

NOELLE

Mr. Jaylen let's be nice...ok?

GRANDPA

We had a great time with them....they were perfect!

GRANDMA

Which airport are you flying into the military base or the Panama City Airport?

JACKSON

The Panama City, Northwest Florida Airport, take back beach road turn right on 79 and...

Grandpa lifts his hand in surrender.

GRANDPA

Son, I've lived here for years....hahahaha I know how to get to the airport.

JACKSON

Hahah Ok dad. We land at 4 oclock.

EXT. BEACH BY THE PIER - AFTERNOON

Jaylen and grandma are walking with Ace down the beach. It's chilly and they have on hoodies and are walking with insulated coffee cups sipping hot chocolate. They see Timothy sitting back in his chair staring at the water. They wave and he looks up for a minute but turns back to the water.

JAYLEN

What's wrong grandma, why wont he say hi.

GRANDMA

Not sure honey. Let's go say hi anyway.

Ace is barking and wagging his tail as they walk up to Timothy.

GRANDMA

Hello Timothy. Chilly out side huh?

TIMOTHY

Yes ma'am it is.

He looks past grandma and Jaylen to the water. He has a vacant look his face. Ace takes off running. Jaylen yells and takes off after Ace.

GRANDMA

Thanks so much for taking time with him. Fishing, playing ball...it's made a difference to him..I see it.

TIMOTHY

He's a good kid.

GRANDMA

We thought we would have problems with him, he is still mad at dad for his deployments. You're like an uncle...

Things are quiet for a minute.

TIMOTHY

Guess the parents will be here this evening huh?

GRANDMA

Yes they arrive in a few hours.

TIMOTHY

Yeah.

Timothy is looking past grandma. He doesn't invite further conversation.

GRANDMA

Do you have a family.....I mean of  
your own

TIMOTHY

Yeah, in Tennessee.

GRANDMA

Do you have pictures of them?

He hesitates then pulls out his phone and scrolls through  
pictures and shows her.

GRANDMA

Twins? Beautiful.

TIMOTHY

My wife Candice and the boys  
Jaylen and Jayson.

GRANDMA

Sorry you can't spend Christmas  
with them

TIMOTHY

Yeah, me to. (Long Pause) Sucks.

In the distance we hear Jaylen announces he's got Ace.

GRANDMA

We would love to have you for  
Christmas. My son Jackson and his  
wife are both military. My husband  
Bill is a retired Marine. We  
understand spending holidays  
alone.

TIMOTHY

Thanks, but I wouldn't be good  
company. Don't want to spoil the  
kids fun.

GRANDMA

Have you been to Sharky's  
restaurant? It's about 2 miles  
down Front Beach Road.

TIMOTHY

Yeah, I ate some oysters  
there...pretty good.

GRANDMA

They have a Christmas eve service  
called Worship at the Water. You  
can ride with us.

TIMOTHY

Ma'am I'm not much on religion. I  
haven't been to.....church in... a  
while.

GRANDMA

It's easy breezy. We sing  
Christmas Carols, read a few  
scriptures and then fellowship  
over coffee and finger foods.  
(Pause) It's really nice.

TIMOTHY

Mmmmm I'll keep that in mind.

Jaylen and Ace run up to them talking. Jaylen is huffing  
and puffing.

JAYLEN

Grammy, Ace chased the cat, but I  
finally got him. Hello Sergeant  
Smith.

TIMOTHY

Hey bud. You stoked up cause mom  
and dad are coming huh?

JAYLEN

Uh huh. Can't wait to show them  
the money and the sandcastle  
trophy we won.

Timothy is still disengaged in conversation. Grandma  
realizes he wants to be alone.

GRANDMA

Well it was good talking with you  
Tim, Merry Christmas.

TIMOTHY

Yeah you too.

Jaylen holds out a fist and Timothy fist bumps him. Jaylen and Grandma walk away. Timothy continues staring into the water.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - EVENING

Scene opens at grandparents home. Both parents are back from DC. Everyone is sitting around the den watching a "How the Grinch Stole Christmas". Kids are in their PJ's and starting to nod off.

JACKSON

Alright kids, it's bed time.

Both kids bolt awake and complain that they're not sleepy.

JAYLEN

But but but dad....it's almost to  
the best part of the movie.

JACKSON

Son, you were sleeping...hahaah  
snoring.

MADISON

We missed you....can't we stay up  
longer?

NOELLE

Were exhausted. We worked almost  
all night and flew here the minute  
we got off work.

JACKSON

Yeah we have a big day tomorrow  
and you can stay up late tomorrow  
if you want. But bedtime now...no  
static.

The kids reluctantly stand up, rub their eyes and stumble to the bedroom.

CUT TO BEDROOM

Kids are in bed Jaylen is in the top bunk and Madison in the bottom one. Noelle and Jackson stand there smiling at them.

NOELLE

We're sorry for being gone so long. But the blizzard was really bad.

JACKSON

People were stranded in their cars with no heat. Many went to the hospital....it was really bad.

NOELLE

I know you wanted us to be here...but thanks for letting us go help.

JACKSON

Yes, that's the spirit of Christmas, sharing. God above is proud of you.

MADISON

It's ok. We had a good time with grammy and papa.

JAYLEN

I had fun too...with Sergeant Smith. We did everything together like fishing, football....it was sweet!

JACKSON

Grandma told me he was good to you guys. I need to go by and thank him.

MADISON

He'll probably be sitting in his  
beach chair looking at the water...  
as usual

Jackson looks at his watch and then at Noelle.

NOELLE

This late? It's chilly outside.

MADISON

He has PTSD.

JACKSON

He does?

MADISON

Yeah I heard grammy and papa  
talking about it.

Jaylen looks down angrily from the top bunk at his sister.  
He waves his finger at her.

JAYLEN

He is just a guy that wants to  
chill out dad. Nothings wrong  
with him. Madison don't know  
anything.

NOELLE

Let's send up a prayer tonight for  
him. He's all alone Christmas.

The kids close their eyes and fold their hands in prayer.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jackson is standing in the kitchen pouring coffee into two  
insulated tumblers. Noelle comes into the kitchen, hugs  
him and kisses him staring into his eyes.

JACKSON

Nice...what did I do to deserve  
that?

NOELLE

You're a good man, a good father  
and a good son to your parents.  
(Pause) I'm lucky to have you.

JACKSON

Mmmmm mom says never argue with a  
woman.

She hugs him tightly. She breaks the embrace and gets a  
bottle of water out the fridge and starts walking away.

NOELLE

Coming to bed?

JACKSON

Not yet. I'm going to see see if  
Sergeant Williams is sitting on  
the beach. Wanna thank him

NOELLE

Want me to come?

JACKSON

Nah man talk. (Pause) Kids say  
the wife and kids are in Tennessee

NOELLE

Divorced?

JACKSON

Not sure.

She kisses him again and leaves the kitchen. Jackson pours  
cream and sugar in both tumblers, stirs and puts the top on.

EXT. BEACH BY THE PIER - NIGHT

Jackson is walking with Ace at his side. He has on a ball  
cap with a light on the bill of the cap. He has both coffee  
tumblers in his hand. He sees a male sitting in a beach  
chair. Ace takes off running towards the man in the chair.  
Jackson picks up a quick pace and calls Ace back.

JACKSON

Ace! Get back her boy!

Jackson walks up to the man seated. He has on white sweats with a hootie top. He greets Ace and rubs him on the head.

JACKSON

Sorry man.

TIMOTHY

It's aigh't.

TIMOTHY

You Sergeant Smith? I'm Jackson,  
Jaylens Dad.

TIMOTHY

Yeah I'm Timothy.....uh Tim's  
fine.

Jackson hands him a tumbler of coffee. Timothy manages a quick smile, then resumes his somber mood as he starts drinking it.

JACKSON

Figured you could use a warm up.  
Jaylen told me you like three  
creams and three sugars in your  
coffee.

TIMOTHY

Thanks! That kid remembers  
everything.

JACKSON

Sure 'preciate you hanging out  
with my son. He was so angry  
when I left....I thought he would  
give my parents a fit.

TIMOTHY

It's all good. He's alright.

JACKSON

He can be a stinker for sure.  
Hahah. (Pause) You Air Force?

TIMOTHY

Yep. Just back from the sand box.

JACKSON

82nd Airborne here. Got back last year.

TIMOTHY

See any action?

JACKSON

Unfortunately yes. Ambushes, IEDs...was rough. Not just on me, but my family.....Jaylen especially.

TIMOTHY

I got you. Same here.

Jackson reaches down and picks up a shell. Stares at it for a second and then throws it towards the water.

JACKSON

Mind if I sit?

TIMOTHY

Nope go for it.

Jackson sits down next to Ace. Things are quiet for a while.

JACKSON

I just got orders to Okinawa Japan. A non-deployable slot. Guess I'll be an office weenie pushing paper.

TIMOTHY

Nice.

JACKSON

Yep. Two year assignment, then I'm done. And the fat lady can sing.

They both have a light chuckle.

TIMOTHY

Bet wifey's glad.

JACKSON

Sure is. She's Coast Guard,  
retires in March. Kinda tough  
Army and Coast Guard being  
stationed together. But thank the  
good Lord, it worked out.

Timothy nods his head and grunts, still looking at the water.

TIMOTHY

Your mom's had me for dinner.  
Great chow. Man haven't had grub  
like that in ages. Then the kids  
beat me in scrabble.

Laughter. They look at each other for a second, then back at the water.

JACKSON

Tim, you got a family?

Timothy exhales and closes his eyes.

JACKSON

Hey dude, if I'm getting in your  
business.

Tim opens both hands and nods.

TIMOTHY

Wife and boys are in Tennessee.  
Had an argument couple months back  
and she left. Not going to beg her  
to come back either. She got a  
good man and if she wanna leave  
me.....

Timothy drinks from his thermos.

JACKSON

Yeah bud I got ya. Same thing happened to me after my last deployment.

TIMOTHY

Sucks. How'd ya keep it together?

JACKSON

Counseling.

TIMOTHY

(Bristling)

I'm not paying someone to listen to our dirty laundry. They will probably take her side anyway.

JACKSON

You know.....I refused counseling for months, until she went to a lawyer. (Pause) But.....there was a chance to save my marriage,... my kids.... I had to do it.

TIMOTHY

You're a better man than me.

JACKSON

The war did something to me, how I thought about people, my family my wife. But the VA counselors many of them are war veterans too.....they helped me.

TIMOTHY

Candice kept telling me to go to the VA. I thought she's trying to change me. Change me into something she wanted. I don't change for nobody. Take it or leave it....I'm me.

JACKSON

You're right man, women do try to change you.

TIMOTHY

She marries a military man and wants me to be touchy feely. I can't be like that on the battle field. How can you.....you know just switch it off when you come back?

JACKSON

It's hard man, real hard. I know.

TIMOTHY

It turns you into someone else. I cant switch from a warrior to a soccer dad. Sometimes I wonder if living is even worth it anymore. I just want to check out.

Timothy is choking up and his voice is wavering. Jackson stands up, bends down and put arm around him.

JACKSON

You changed Jaylen's life. He talked about you every day.  
(Pause) Your sons need you...Candice needs you. Don't give up man.

Ace barks and takes off. About 30 yards away a woman is walking with a flashlight. Ace runs up to her and barks happily wagging his tail

NOELLE

Jack ...honey is that you?

JACKSON

Yeah over here

Noelle continues walking until she meets the guys. Timothy stands up when she arrives.

JACKSON

This is my wife Noelle.....this is Sergeant Smith..uh Tim

Timothy sticks his hand out to shake Noelle's, but she quickly grabs Timothy and hugs him. She pulls back and smiles at Tim.

NOELLE

What a blessing you were to Jaylen. He was so excited to tell us what you guys did every minute of the day. I couldn't wait for his daily update. He must have 100 pictures on instagram

JACKSON

Yeah dude, I almost got jealous hahaha. He was always talking about Sergeant Smith said this or that.

TIMOTHY

Jaylen and Madison, they're good kids. You raised 'em well...respectful to adults.

JACKSON

Military kids...have to be tough. They have to cope with alot of stuff other kids don't.

Noelle puts her arm around Jackson's waist and snuggles at his side.

NOELLE

Sorry to break up your male bonding, but Jaylen has the poopies. His stomach's upset he's in the bathroom asking for you.

JACKSON

He's probably been sneaking cookies and now he's paying for it.

NOELLE

Tim will you join us for a Christmas eve crab boil?

Timothy is uncertain looking around thinking.

JACKSON

It's good man. Dad fixes this  
great cole slaw and Madison will  
make her famous cheddar bay  
biscuits.

TIMOTHY

Uh....

NOELLE

It's settled, we'll see you at 5pm  
on the patio. Let's go honey.

Noelle takes Jackson's hand and starts leading him away.  
Jackson looks back and shrugs his shoulder raises his eye  
brows in a smile.

INT. BEACH HOUSE- BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jackson is laying in bed scrolling through his phone. Noelle  
is standing next to the bed rubbing lotion on.

JACKSON

Tim is a good guy. But you put  
him on the spot...with the crab boil  
invite. Not sure if he wanted to  
come

NOELLE

Nonsense, its obvious the man is  
lonely. It's Christmas, he needs  
to be with people

JACKSON

Hummm maybe

NOELLE

What's his wife's name?

JACKSON

Uh...I think he said Candice.

NOELLE

I going to see if I can find his wife on Facebook or linked-in. She is crazy to leave the fine man alone at the beach for Christmas.

Jackson puts down his phone in exasperation.

JACKSON

No! He's a grown man...let him handle his business

NOELLE

If his wife only knew he spends hours staring off into the horizon. Plus his kids alone for Christmas without dad .....it's a mess all around.

JACKSON

Noelle, stay out of it!

She bends down smiling and puckers up.

NOELLE

Give me a kiss honey....mmmmmm

JACKSON

No kisses for you. You're being a nosey marosey like your mom says.

Jackson reaches over and turns off the lights.

EXT. BEACH BY THE PIER - MORNING

It's 11am and everyone is sitting at the beach. Madison and Jaylen are playing in the sand when two kids walk up and join in. Noelle, Jackson and the grandparents are seated on a blanket.

NOELLE

Good news! I found Sergeant Smith's wife and sent her a Facebook message.

Jackson puts down his phone and exhales in frustration.

JACKSON

Honey, I thought we agreed last night it was a bad idea.

GRANDMA

Maybe not so bad of an idea. He is lonely son.

Jackson is exasperated and looks to his father.

JACKSON

Dad help!

GRANDPA

Son, can't argue with two women. Didn't I teach you that.

JACKSON

She could have made it worse. What if the wife is already...uh seeing someone. She could call and tell Tim to mind his own business.

GRANDMA

Maybe...but it's worth a try. I'd want someone to help you guys out....if it ever came to that.

Jaylen runs up showing everyone the a hermit crab he found. The crab escapes and runs across the sand with Jaylen hot after him.

GRANDPA

So you guys are taking off in the morning huh?

JACKSON

Yea dad. Stopping in Atlanta to see her folks for a couple days. Then heading back to DC.

GRANDMA

It's been a blessing to have the kids with us. Sure will miss them when you go to Japan.

GRANDPA

They kept us on our toes. Remembered ever promise we made to them. Hhahaha even things we said in passing.

Jackson puts both hands on Noelle's shoulder and lightly massages her neck. He kisses her gently on the shoulder.

JACKSON

Honey Are you still going to Pier Park shopping?

NOELLE

Yeah last minute gifts, then taking them to see the new Disney movie.

GRANDMA

Let's stop by Miracle Strip amusement park. We went there a few days after you left, but it rained and we promised they could go back.

GRANDPA

Don't forget Santa is arriving by boat at 6pm. Just down there at the pier pylons.

JACKSON

That's right, I saw that on the news last night. I didn't tell the kids, it should be a nice surprise.

NOELLE

I hope Timothy joins us. Would do him good to be around people.

GRANDMA

You're right. He was a different person at the house. He was laughing with the kids and having fun.

JACKSON

You invited him, that's all we can do.

We see Meredith and William walking the beach with their golden retriever. They wave and walk over to the group. After a few minutes Meredith and William take off. When they make it to the pier Noelle stands up and walks fast to them calling them and waving.

They talk for a few minutes. Noelle makes a call and passes the phone to William. He talks a minute then hands the phone back to Noelle. She jumps up and down and hugs William. Then they walk off together holding hands. Noelle returns to sit on the blanket with the family.

JACKSON

Ok. What was that about?

NOELLE

It's Christmas. Don't be a party pooper.

GRANDMA

Jackson baby...she's got that look in her eye.

JACKSON

Who you telling mom? I see that all the time...and I know I'm sunk

Grandpa stands up and brushes off sand.

GRANDPA

Son, take me to the fish market. We need seafood for the crab boil.

GRANDMA

Go on Thomas Drive, by Captain Anderson's. You can get it fresh, just as the fishermen

(MORE)

GRANDMA (cont'd)  
offload their catch.

Jackson stands up gathers his stuff.

JACKSON  
See you ladies later on.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE-PATIO - AFTERNOON

It's 5pm, clear blue skies. The patio is full of people tastefully decorated holiday decorations. Kids are playing right outside the patio in the sand.

JACKSON  
Come on dad, how long dad til its ready? I'm starving...haven't eaten since breakfast

Jackson lifts up the grill and snatches a sausage and pops it in his mouth. Grandpa pops him on the hand with a thongs. Everyone laughs.

GRANDPA  
(Exasperated)  
Get outa there. Son you're worse than the kids. Relax it's almost ready.

A voice is heard saying "Throw me the ball" We see a ball sail in the air to someone walking near the foot of the patio in the sand. Timothy walks into view.

TIMOTHY  
Go out guys...here is comes.

Timothy throws the ball and both boys for it. Jaylen catches it and both boys crash into each other landing on the sand. Jaylen gets up in triumph and runs full speed to Timothy to give the football back.

TIMOTHY  
Good catch

JAYLEN

Throw it...I'm going out.

Jaylen takes off running with the other boy to catch the football.

He throws the ball again and both boys go up and Jaylen catches it again.

TIMOTHY

You guys keep practicing, I'll come back after a while.

Timothy walks up wearing his light blue Air Force polo shirt and khaki slacks. His hair is cut neatly and he is freshly shaven. He has a two nail cross around his neck, looks like a new man.

JACKSON

Yo dude, glad ya came

Jackson comes up and shakes his hand, then does a "man hug" with the forearm in between. Everyone else offers hand shakes. Timothy is handed a bottled iced tea and stands chatting.

TIMOTHY

I could smell it all the way to my house.

A loud fog horn is heard three times. A red pirate ship drifts into view and stops half way from the shore. Santa Clause is seen standing and waving. Kids walking along the beach are excited, jumping and clapping

GRANDMA

Santa's arrived.

NOELLE

Has.... he ever! I hope the kids don't end up wet. We're going to worship service later.

A small boat pulls along side the big pirate ship and Santa gets in with two big velvet red sacks and an elf helper. The boat speeds towards the shore. When the boat gets right on

the beach, Santa and his elf helper get out, each with a red velvet bag.

SANTA

Merry Christmas boys and girls!  
Has everyone been good this year?

KIDS AT THE BEACH.

Yes Santa!

Santa and the elf place the bags on the sand and look inside expectantly. A blond boy about 3 years old runs up excitedly smiling.

SANTA'S ELF

What's your name little boy?

BOY AT THE BEACH

Addison.

SANTA'S ELF

Santa do you have a present for  
Addison whose 6 years old.

Santa reaches into his bag and pulls out a little wrapped boy and hands it to Addison. He races up to his parents and jumps up and down in excitement.

SANTA'S ELF

What is your name?

LITTLE BOY

Thomas

SANTA'S ELF

Do you have something for Thomas  
whose 3 years old?

Santa hands a toy to Thomas who also races up the sand past his parents, then realizes it and runs back and hands it to his dad. Madison moves near Santa and tries to look in the bag.

SANTA

Ho Ho HO, I see a pretty little  
girl here. What's your name?

Madison shyly walks up to Santa while looking back at her parents for reassurance.

MADISON

I'm Madison from Washington DC and  
I am 7 years old.

SANTA'S ELF

I bet Santa has something special  
for Madison.

Santa reaches into his bag and pulls out a brightly wrapped pink gift and hands it to her.

MADISON

Thank you Santa.

She gives him a hug and runs full speed back up to everyone.

INT. BEACH HOUSE-LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The crab boil is over and everyone's helping to clean up.

GRANDPA

What time are we leaving for the  
Christmas eve service at Sharky's?

Grandma pats Tim on the back.

GRANDMA

Starts in 30 minutes. Tim would  
you like to ride with us?

TIMOTHY

I don't know about going to church  
in a restaurant. Never heard of  
that.

GRANDPA

They block off a section of the  
dining room. We sing Christmas  
carols and have hot cocoa and  
snacks. It's a community  
tradition.

TIMOTHY

Mmmmmm

GRANDMA

It's really quite beautiful the  
open air, sky and stars, the  
ocean.

Jaylen walks up and stands next to Timothy.

JAYLEN

Dad can I ride on the back of  
Timothy's motorcycle? He has an  
extra helmet?

Jackson looks at Timothy with a smile.

JACKSON

Not this time son. He may have  
something else to do tonight.

JAYLEN

Awwwww dad!

INT. SHARKY'S RESTURANT - NIGHT

At Sharky's Restaurant. A bright moon shimmies over the water. People are walking near the water with flashlight. Sharky's is decorated like with Christmas trees, lights, and other festive accouterments. The workers have on Santa hats, elf hats or other Christmas clothing.

The band is set up in the area blocked off for service. Jackson, Noelle and the kids walk up to Meridith who is helping set up for service.

JACKSON

Where's hubby? I got that DVD he  
wanted.

MEREDITH

He's giving someone a ride. Should  
be here in a few.

The pastor has the microphone and announces the service is ready to start.

PASTOR

I'm Pastor Steven Irwin and thank you for coming to Worship at the Water. Please join us in singing jingle bells.

As parishioners are is singing, Timothy walks up tentatively and stands next to Jackson. He acknowledges Jackson and gives him a chin nod. Noelle looks over and smiles broadly.

After the service is over they dismiss and people are milling about drinking and eating. The kids are playing and running. The group is standing around talking.

JACKSON

Looks like hubby couldn't make it.  
Christmas eve traffic. Can you give it to him?

Jackson hands Meredith the DVD.

MEREDITH

Well he texted me ...and .... Oh here he is now.

William walks up with an attractive African American woman about 30 years old 5'8, wearing a red dress with black boots and santa hat. She is standing next to twin boys who each have Air Force jackets.

WILLIAM

Everyone, this is Candice, Timothy's wife. And their son's Jaylen and Jayson.

Jackson is shocked and stutters.

JACKSON

What? What? How how in the world?

He looks at Noelle who is smiling broadly. Grandma folds her hand and closes her eyes, tears form.

GRANDMA

Thank God. Where's Tim?

JACKSON

Ok Miss noseey marosey looks like  
your meddling...turned out  
ok.....this time!

GRANDPA

Sure did. What a fine woman you  
have there son.

The twins look around until they see Timothy and run towards  
him screaming.

THE TWINS

Daddy Daddy!

Timothy quickly turns looks at them, blinks and shakes his  
head. The boys run up to him and hug his leg. He picks  
them both up and has them on either hip and hugs them. He  
walks over to the group. Candice stands tentatively.  
Timothy throws caution to the wind and puts the boys down,  
scoops up his wife and spins her around.

TIMOTHY

I...how did you...

Candice looks at Noelle and then at William.

CANDICE

Noelle hit me up on face book and  
told me.....that you needed  
us...needed me.

TIMOTHY

Lord knows I do. But how did you  
find a flight out? And the money.  
We didn't have enough with... the  
bills and.....

Candice points to William who is all smiles and pats Timothy  
on the back.

WILLIAM

Remember, I fly for the Airlines.  
We get buddy passes for free  
flights. Cant think of a better  
way to use them.

TIMOTHY

Noelle I can't thank you enough.  
Jack told me you're a wonderful,  
incredible woman...he's right

TIMOTHY

Here are my boys Jaylen and  
Jason. Boys these are you  
new...uh God Parents.

Candice and Noelle are both tearing up. Noelle hugs her and  
they both wipe away tears with big smiles.

CANDICE

God parents....yes! I totally  
agree.

GRANDMA

God can do miracles,...when we  
least expect it.

GRANDPA

You're right punkin' He may not  
come when you want him but He's  
always right on time.

Scene ends as Timothy is smiling with his arm around his  
wife as if he wont let her go. His sons are playing with  
Madison, Jaylen and other kids. He kisses his wife, she  
takes off her Santa hat and puts it on his head. He  
straightens it up smiling.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE-DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Everyone is standing outside Grandma's house as Noelle and  
Jackson prepare to leave. Jackson is dragging two suit  
cases and two wrapped around his chest. Timothy runs over  
and relieves his Jackson of two of the suit cases and helps  
him pack it up. They are ear shot away from everyone.

TIMOTHY

I can't tell you....uh...thanks man.  
You wife is incredible.

JACKSON

It's all good....glad things worked  
out

TIMOTHY

I'm a do what you said,..... you  
know about counseling. I called  
the 24 hour help line last night  
and they got us set up for  
counseling.

JACKSON

Roger that. Give it all you got  
man. You have a wonderful  
family....fight for it...no matter  
what.

Timothy and Jackson makes eye contact for a few second. Then  
Timothy sticks his hand out and Jackson shakes his hand and  
does a man hug. Noelle walks up grinning.

NOELLE

Ooohhh More male bonding huh? I  
love it.

Both of the guys laugh, hold their heads down and shake it.

TIMOTHY

You're funny lady.

NOELLE

Nice to see you smiling Tim. You  
take care of that beautiful  
family.

TIMOTHY

Sure will. Hey I'll be in the DC  
area in the spring for my parent's  
30th anniversary, maybe we can  
link up.

NOELLE

Please do! Jaylen will love it.  
Don't forget now.

TIMOTHY

You saved my marriage, my  
family....I'll never forget you.

NOELLE

You helped Jaylen cope....you were  
like a second father....thanks  
again.

GRANDPA

Everyone gather around, let's send  
them off with a prayer.

Everyone forms a hug and grandpa prays. At the end they say amen and Merry Christmas to each other and hug. Jaylen runs over and grabs Timothy and he picks up Jaylen and hugs him tightly and sets him down. Jaylen's voice cracks as he says bye to Timothy. With everyone in the car, they roll down the window and stick their arms out, waving as they pull away.

END OF MOVIE

FADE OUT.