

ALWAYS FAITHFUL

Written by

Lonnie C. McIntyre

Mcintyre911@gmail.com  
919-210-6964

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INT. U.S. MARINE CORPS RECRUITING OFFICE - DAY

SERGEANT CALLAHAN, 25, is on the phone with a potential applicant.

His desk is disorganized, with papers spread all over the desk.

The small office consists of two desks, a couch, a desk with a little television, and a mannequin wearing a Marine Corps Dress Uniform.

The blue and red walls of the office are covered with Marine Corps posters.

Two young men are sitting on the couch reading Marine Corps brochures.

The office door chimes as DOUG JOHNSON (18), short, obviously too overweight to join the military, walks into the office.

Sergeant Callahan spins around in his chair to see who walked in. He notices Doug and puts up the one-finger sign to let him know he'll be with him in a minute.

Sergeant Callahan spins back around and resumes his phone conversation.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN

So, based on everything you told me, it seems the Marine Corps may be a good fit for you.

Doug remains standing in the entranceway. He waves at the boys sitting on the couch and glances at the posters on the wall.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

Yeah, man, that's what I was thinking as well. Tell you what, why don't you come by tomorrow afternoon around 3 o'clock and we'll get more into the details.

Sergeant Callahan is quiet for a few seconds.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

Alright, man, sounds like a plan. See you tomorrow.

He hangs up the phone and spins around to address Doug.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. What's your name?

DOUG

Doug, sir.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN

Doug. Okay, Doug, I'm Sergeant Callahan.

Sergeant Callahan stands up to shake hands with Doug.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

What brings you in here today, Doug?

DOUG

I want to be a Marine.

Sergeant Callahan gives Doug a quick look over.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN

Alright, Doug, I'm a straight shooter. How much do you weigh right now?

DOUG

About 210.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN

210, alright. If I'm guessing correctly, I'd say you're about 5'8?

DOUG

That's right, sir.

Sergeant Callahan opens his top desk drawer, sifts through some documents, and pulls out a laminated paper sheet.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN

Alright, according to our enlistment standards, your maximum weight for 5'8 is 180 pounds. So, we are looking at a thirty-pound difference...

(takes his eyes off of the paper and looks directly at Doug)

... At this time, you don't meet our initial entry standards.

Doug glances over at the boys on the couch.

DOUG

I know that, sir, but I can lose the weight.

Sergeant Callahan also glances over at the boys on the couch. They are staring intently at Doug.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
Hey Doug, let's go outside for a minute.

Doug turns around to walk outside, Sergeant Callahan follows.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
(to the boys on the couch)  
I'll be right back.

EXT. MARINE CORPS RECRUITING OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sergeant Callahan and Doug are standing directly in front of the recruiting station.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
Alright, here's where we're at. You want to be a Marine, but you need to lose at least 30 pounds first...  
(checks his cell phone)  
... and I have a lot of things going on right now.

Sergeant Callahan looks into his office window.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
See the guy on the couch wearing the blue shirt? He leaves for recruit training tomorrow. I have to get him ready to ship out. The guy sitting beside him is his friend that wants to join. I'm working on his paperwork.

Doug looks into the window, then back at Sergeant Callahan.

DOUG  
(with a slight attitude)  
Well, sir, is there another recruiter in your office that's not so busy?

Sergeant Callahan's eyes widen.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
(smiling)  
Easy there, Doug. You're serious about this, huh?

DOUG  
I'll do whatever it takes, sir!

Sergeant Callahan looks off in the distance, appearing to think about the situation for a second.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
Tell you what, I'm going to leave a sheet of paper on my desk with your name on it. Once a week, preferably on Saturday mornings, you come by and write the date and your weight.

DOUG  
Why sir?

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
If you want to be a Marine, you have to lose that weight. No one else can do that for you. I can give you some workout plans and food recommendations, but YOU have to do the work.

Doug rubs his hands together.

DOUG  
Okay, Sergeant, I'll do it.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
Alright!

Sergeant Callahan reaches into his pocket and pulls out a business card.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
I'm always here on Saturday mornings, but even if I'm not here, just walk in and put your stuff on the paper. I'll let the other recruiter know what's going on.

Doug takes the card and puts it in his pocket.

DOUG  
Thank you, sir.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
I have to run back inside, but I expect to see you every week.

DOUG  
I'll be there, sir.

## MONTAGE - DOUG WEIGHS IN OVER SEVERAL WEEKS

-- In Week 2, Sergeant Callahan is not in the office, but Doug writes 205 pounds on the paper.

-- Week 3, 201 pounds. Sergeant Callahan smiles and shakes hands with Doug.

-- Week 4, 198 pounds. Sergeant Callahan is on the phone but smiles at Doug once he sees the weight. Doug smiles back and gives him a thumbs-up.

-- Week 5, Sergeant Callahan looks at the paper, but there is no date or weight listed.

-- Week 6, 204 pounds. Sergeant Callahan is speaking with another young man. Doug comes in, writes his weight down, and dashes out of the office.

-- Week 7 206 pounds. Doug comes in, and writes his weight down. Sergeant Callahan is out of the office.

END MONTAGE

SUPER: WEEK 10

## INT. MARINE CORPS RECRUITING OFFICE - DAY

Sergeant Callahan checks the paper on his desk, and it appears that Doug hasn't been in the office in about three weeks.

The phone on Sergeant Callahan's desk starts to ring.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
United States Marine Corps  
Recruiting Office, Sergeant  
Callahan speaking.

Sergeant Callahan begins to take notes of the conversation.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
Yeah, he should be good to go. Yes,  
as long as the tattoo is not on his  
neck. Yep, five o'clock will work.  
I'll see you then.

Sergeant Callahan hangs up the phone and finishes up his notes.

The front door chimes, and in walks Doug.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
Doug! What happened to you, man! I thought we had a plan.

DOUG  
I'm sorry, Sergeant; it was much harder than I thought.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
C'mon Doug; you're killing me! Did you gain all of your weight back?

Doug looks like he has given up. He doesn't make eye contact with Sergeant Callahan. He stands there with his shoulders slouched and hunched forward.

DOUG  
Yes sir.

Sergeant Callahan EXHALES loudly and leans back in his chair.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
Well, I can't do it for you, Doug. You have to want it. I'll be here when you're ready to take things seriously.

DOUG  
Yes sir.

Doug begins to turn around but stops. He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a scarlet-colored velvet ring case, and turns back to face Sergeant Callahan.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Sergeant Callahan, my dad was in the Marine Corps, but he died in Iraq a few years ago.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
Oh, I'm sorry to hear that, kid.

DOUG  
He was on his third tour and mostly there to help train the younger Marines.

Doug gives the case to Sergeant Callahan, and he opens it. Inside is a gold ring that has the Marine Corps Insignia in the center. On each side are the words Semper Fidelis.

Tears look like they are forming in Doug's eyes.

DOUG (CONT'D)

That's my father's ring. He used to wear it every day. I asked to wear it before, but he said only Marines should wear it. Anyway, I don't know any other Marines in this town, other than you. I think you should keep it.

Before Sergeant Callahan can respond, Doug hurries out of the office.

Sergeant Callahan stares at the ring for a few seconds, and then he chases after Doug.

EXT. FORESTLAND PARK - MORNING

It is early, and the sun is barely up. There is a steep hill in the center of the park.

Cresting the hill is Sergeant Callahan, jogging at a nice steady pace.

A few seconds behind him is Doug, barely shuffling his feet, mouth wide open, sucking in air, struggling.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN

Let's go, Doug! Don't you quit on me! Don't you quit on me!

Sergeant Callahan is in full Drill Instructor mode. He is screaming at Doug, trying to motivate him.

Doug slows down even more and starts to walk.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

Are you kidding me? You better stop walking, Doug! You better stop walking! Don't waste my time if you're just going to get out there and give up!

Doug attempts to start running again, but he returns to the slow shuffle he was doing earlier.

MONTAGE - SERGEANT CALLAHAN AND DOUG WORKOUT

-- Doug is struggling to pull himself up on the pull-up bar. Sergeant Callahan is yelling at him.

-- They are running up the same hill again. Doug is still trailing behind, struggling to keep up.



-- They are sitting in the recruiting office eating salad.

-- Doug gets on the scale, 200 pounds.

-- Again, Doug struggles to pull himself up on the pull-up bar.

END MONTAGE

EXT. MARINE CORPS RECRUITING OFFICE - DAY

Doug lets go of the pull-up bar and drops back to the ground.

DOUG

I'm never going to be able to do a pull-up, and I can't lose the weight.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN

You're absolutely right! You're never going to do it if you keep thinking that way and using the words CAN'T and NEVER! You only need to be able to do ONE pull-up Doug!

Doug wipes his hands on his pants.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

I don't believe you have been honest with me during this process, Doug. There's no way that you would still be in the 200s if you followed the meal plan.

Doug starts to tie his shoe.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

Look at me, Doug! Are you following the meal plan?

DOUG

No sir.

Sergeant Callahan throws up his hands.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN

So, I'm just wasting my time and energy! What am I doing here?

DOUG  
I'm so sorry, sir. I don't know..I  
don't know why I can't get it  
together. I'm sorry.

Doug starts heading toward his car.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
Where are you going, Doug? Doug,  
listen to me! If you give up now,  
you're going to be giving up the  
rest of your life! I'm not letting  
you give up, Doug!

Doug keeps walking without looking back.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
Doug! Get back over here! Doug!

EXT. DOUG'S HOUSE - MORNING

A finger is pressing the front doorbell of a home.

A few seconds later, the door swings open to show Doug.

DOUG  
Sergeant Callahan, what are you  
doing here?

Sergeant Callahan is dressed in a sweatshirt, jogging pants,  
and sneakers.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
I was hoping that you would help me  
find someone. I'm looking for a  
highly motivated young man that  
came into my office a few weeks ago  
that wanted to join the United  
States Marine Corps.

Doug's face remains unchanged.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
He is about your height, weight,  
and said he would do whatever it  
took to be a Marine.

Sergeant Callahan offers Doug one of the two bottles of water  
he is carrying.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
Will you help me find him?

Doug stares at Sergeant Callahan for a moment, then looks down at the bottled water. He takes the water and looks back at Sergeant Callahan.

DOUG  
(smiling)  
Yes, I will!

SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER

EXT. PARRIS ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA - PARADE DECK - DAY

Large groups of fresh-faced Marines are congregating with their families.

Hugs are being exchanged; Drill Instructors are actually smiling.

A woman is making her way through the crowd, ALICE (30s).

She is strolling, looking left and right.

DOUG (O.S.)  
Mom!

Alice turns around and sees Doug in a Marine Corps Dress Uniform.

ALICE  
Oh, my God!

DOUG  
Mom, you walked right past me!

Alice snatches Doug and almost squeezes the life out of him.

ALICE  
Oh, my goodness! I missed you so much!

DOUG  
I missed you too, mom!

Alice releases Doug and takes a few steps back. She starts to look him up and down.

ALICE  
Just look at you, Doug; I can't believe it! I didn't even recognize you! You look so different, so thin!

Doug's face starts to get a little red.

DOUG  
(smiling)  
Thanks, mom! Yeah, I lost a little weight.

ALICE  
A little! I'm sure we have to get you all new clothes.

DOUG  
You're probably right.

ALICE  
Wow...  
(still looking him up and down)  
...well, I know you're ready to get home.

DOUG  
YES. I. AM! Get me out of here!

ALICE  
Okay, but first, I have a surprise for you.

DOUG  
Surprise?

ALICE  
Yeah, turn around.

Doug turns around to see Sergeant Callahan standing there in his Dress Uniform.

DOUG  
Sergeant Callahan! No way!

Doug grabs Sergeant Callahan, and they share a brief hug.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
You did it, man!

DOUG  
I wouldn't be standing here if it weren't for you, Sergeant. Thank you for not giving up on me.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
Hey, you did all of the work,...  
(looks down at Doug's uniform)  
...that uniform looks good on you!

DOUG  
Thanks, Sergeant! I'm down to 164  
now!

Wow! SERGEANT CALLAHAN Wow! ALICE

SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
That's amazing! So, how was it?

DOUG  
It was everything you said it would  
be, and worse!

                  SERGEANT CALLAHAN  
Ha Ha! I couldn't spoil all of the  
secrets!

Doug and Sergeant Callahan share a laugh.

ALICE  
Well, Doug says he's ready to get  
out of here. Are you ready  
Sergeant?

SURE. SERGEANT CALLAHAN

Doug and Alice turn around and start to walk away.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
Hey, Private Johnson.

Doug and Alice turn around.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
I think you forgot something.

Sergeant Callahan pulls out the ring that Doug gave him a few years ago. He hands it to Doug.

SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
Go ahead and put it on...MARINE.

Doug looks at the ring for a few seconds and slips it on. Although he tries to hold them back, the tears begin to flow.

He looks at Sergeant Callahan with his eyes full of tears.

                  SERGEANT CALLAHAN (CONT'D)  
I'm sure your father would have  
been proud of you. You did good,  
kid.

Sergeant Callahan loses his composure and starts to cry openly. Doug does the same, and they grab each other, hugging and crying.

Alice is crying as well and puts her arms around both of them.

FADE TO BLACK.