

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Written by

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FADE IN

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS MORNING - DAY

A warm, bright room, slightly messy with wrapping paper. A lit Christmas tree is in the corner.

THOMAS (40s) sits on a sofa, a forced smile on his face. Opposite him, his two teenage kids, LIAM (16) and CHLOE (17), tear into presents.

THOMAS  
(Softly)  
Go on, Liam. First one.

Liam grins and rips the paper from a small, heavy box.

LIAM  
A watch! Whoa!

He pulls out a beautiful gold watch. It gleams in the Christmas light.

LIAM (CONT'D)  
It's amazing, Dad. Seriously.

Thomas nods, his smile tight. The sound of the wrapping paper  
FADES.

FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A dark city street. RAIN.

CLOSE ON: Thomas's hands, younger, wet, slick. He lunges from an alley.

A man in a suit YELPS as Thomas snatches the watch right off his wrist. Thomas runs, the gold catching the streetlight.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS MORNING - DAY

Thomas blinks, the sound of the paper returning.

CHLOE  
My turn, my turn!

Chloe opens a velvet box. Inside, diamond stud earrings.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Oh my God, Dad. They're stunning.  
Thank you!

She immediately holds them up to her ears, beaming. Thomas watches her, his eyes distant.

FLASHBACK - DAY

A dusty kitchen. Sunlight through a grimy window.

An ELDERLY WOMAN is pushed roughly against a counter. She cries out, weak.

CLOSE ON: Thomas's fingers brutally yanking the earrings from the woman's earlobes. A spot of BLOOD on his thumb.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS MORNING - DAY

Thomas wipes a sudden bead of sweat from his forehead. His breathing is quick.

LIAM  
Okay, second round!

Liam tears open a large, flat box.

LIAM (CONT'D)  
A new tablet! Yes! I needed this  
for school.

Thomas forces a chuckle, but his gaze darts nervously to the front door.

FLASHBACK - DAY

A noisy, bustling cafe.

Thomas, sitting, looking casual. His hand shoots out, grabbing a tablet off a table where a SCHOOL KID has set it down.

Thomas is out the door and running before the Kid even looks up.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS MORNING - DAY

Chloe is ecstatic, holding a slim box.

CHLOE  
Mine! Mine!

She opens it. A shiny new mobile phone.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
It's the newest model! I love you!

She jumps up and hugs Thomas fiercely. He holds her, his body rigid.

FLASHBACK - DAY

Thomas on a BICYCLE, fast, riding on a sidewalk.

He leans over, his arm extended. A quick, violent YANK. A woman on her phone stumbles as Thomas snatches it, the phone's screen flashing as he speeds away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS MORNING - DAY

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

A heavy, deliberate BANGING on the front door. The sound is deafening in the sudden silence.

Liam and Chloe freeze, looking toward the hallway.

LIAM  
Dad?

Thomas's eyes are wide, his face grey. He puts on his practiced, warm smile.

THOMAS  
(Calmly)  
Nothing to worry about. Probably  
just a package delivery. Finish  
your presents, you two.

Liam and Chloe look at each other, confused, but turn back to the remaining gifts. They look genuinely happy.

Thomas rises, smoothing his shirt. He glances at the archway leading to the kitchen.

THOMAS (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
(Muttering, to himself)  
They're happy. That's all that  
matters.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

SARAH (40s), Thomas's wife, is stirring something on the stove. She wears an apron. She looks up, hearing the knock and Thomas's strained tone. She gives him a concerned look.

Thomas shakes his head—don't follow me.

INT. HALLWAY/FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Thomas reaches the front door. He pauses, his hand hovering over the lock. He takes a deep, shuddering breath.

He opens the door.

Two POLICE OFFICERS stand on the step. The Christmas lights on the porch twinkle behind them.

OFFICER  
Thomas Miller?

Thomas drops his head, closing his eyes for a beat. He looks past the officers, over his shoulder, toward the living room.

THOMAS  
(Quiet, broken)  
I surrender. Just... don't let my  
kids see this. My wife's in the  
kitchen. She'll... she'll look after  
them.

The Officer nods.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chloe is laughing, holding a roll of tape. Liam is happily setting up his new tablet. They are oblivious.

EXT. FRONT STEP - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Thomas's hands, being cuffed. The metal of the handcuffs GLEAMS.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chloe smiles, catching Liam's eye.

CHLOE  
Best Christmas ever.

FADE TO BLACK.