

# Slide to Survival

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GRANT'S CAR

The engine roars to life as he speeds out of the driveway.

MOVING

GRANT (forties), was once in shape, but now, not so much. We can tell by how close his stomach is to touching the steering wheel. He appears rugged and disheveled. His eyes? Weathered. But they still hold a glimmer of hope.

He drives with his phone pressed to his ear, navigating through morning traffic.

GRANT  
(into phone)  
Okay, I need you to email me the contract details. I'll review them on my way. Yes, now.

...LATER...

His forehead creases as he glances at the GPS. He's late.

ALEX  
(muttering)  
Come on, come on...

Suddenly, he realizes he needs to make a turn. He quickly changes lanes, his attention divided between the GPS and the road...

...He ends up making the wrong turn...

...LATER...

Now stuck in heavier traffic, his patience wearing thin.

He ends the phone call with a sigh, the work convo is seemingly endless.

He taps the steering wheel in frustration. He glances at a family in a car beside him, their laughter audible even through the closed windows. They appear to be genuinely happy.

...His face softens, longing and disappointment in his eyes.

WAWA PARKING LOT - LATER

Grant pulls into a parking spot. His eyes catching the dashboard clock: 2:56. He steps out the car...

The 8 lane HIGHWAY separates him from ACTIONZONE WATERPARK.

He crosses to the other side of the HIGHWAY and hops over the median.

EXT. ACTION ZONE WATERPARK - PARKING LOT ENTRANCE

A line of cars wait to pay for parking.

Grant walks across the parking lot, it's at least a mile. He's sweaty and his clothes stick to him uncomfortably.

As he walks further, the rows of empty parking spaces stretch ahead. The distance seems longer than he remembered.

EXT. ACTION ZONE WATERPARK - AFTERNOON

The sun casts its unforgiving heat on whoever's outside.

Meanwhile, the park buzzes with the energy of thrill seeking excitement.

Trying to hideout in the shade we find SARAH (forties), long chestnut hair with brown, expressive eyes. She carries herself with elegance and poise. She's standing with her children ALEX (10, lanky, his blue eyes are filled with curiosity) and EMILY (7, a pint-sized firecracker. Her dark, unruly hair never quite listens to hairpins).

ALEX

Mom, it's already 3:42, is he going to do this again?

SARAH

He'll be here.

ALEX

He's said that before.

EMILY

Mad times.

SARAH

Remember I told you about the 'benefit of the doubt'? Lets give it to your father. Besides, this isn't just any day.

ALEX

(beaming)

You're right, this isn't just any other day!

Grant spots his family waiting, and guilt washes over him. He approaches them sweaty and with a forced smile.

SARAH

Well look who it is! We were getting worried.

EMILY

Noooooo {we were not}.

GRANT

Parking's so damn expensive.

ALEX

(excited)

Yeahhhh! Let's go!

He checks his watch. It reads 3:26pm and 102F.

GRANT

(suggestive)

You know, guys, if we wait till 4, it's half-off regular price.

Emily and Alex exchange a puzzled look, not understanding.

EMILY

But we're already here, Dad. Can't we just go in now?

GRANT

It's just a few more minutes. We'll save some money. It's a good deal, right?

Sarah glances at Grant with a slightly annoyed smile.

SARAH

The kids have been waiting, Grant.

GRANT

(lethal)

Well some of us have to budget, Sarah.

EMILY

I'm hot.

ALEX

(impatient)

Dad, please can we go in now?

EMILY

Yea, I wanna go on the big slide!

ALEX  
I want to try everything!

EMILY  
Even the big twisty one?

ALEX  
Especially the big twisty one!

EXT. LOG RIDE EXIT

Sarah, Grant, Emily, and Alex step off the Log Ride, soaked clothes clinging to their bodies. But Sarah's the most wet.

SARAH  
Now that was a ride.

EMILY  
Yeah, mom, its like they hid the last drop.

ALEX  
I knew it was coming.

EMILY  
Then why were you screaming like a baby?

Sarah flicks water off her arm.

SARAH  
I wasn't expecting to be this wet.

EMILY  
Well, someone used you as a human shield.

She cuts her eyes at her dad.

GRANT  
I think I won the driest rider contest, hands down.

The kids offer a nod and a half-hearted smile before returning their attention to Sarah, who walks slightly ahead.

SARAH  
(engaging the kids)  
We might need to appoint Dad as your official splash blocker next time.

GRANT  
Guys, you see how I braced myself?  
It's a secret trick, I saw it on  
Mr. Beast.

Emily makes a face.

EMILY  
Uh-uh. He doesn't do tricks.

GRANT  
Well someone on Youtube I learned  
it from.  
(re:GoPro)  
Wanna see the video I took, Em?

Emily looks uncertain:

EMILY  
Maybe later.

GRANT  
Al?

ALEX  
The parks closing soon, dad and the  
vortex awaits.

SARAH  
My bladder can't. Bathroom break  
please.

Sarah eyes the RESTROOM sign and stops on the long line.  
Alex exhales his frustration.

ALEX  
(can't wait)  
Mom...

SARAH  
Ten-minutes, please, if you may?

EMILY  
I don't have to go.

SARAH  
You sure?

EMILY  
I went on the last ride. That's  
what they put Clorox in the water  
for, right?

Unbeknownst to his parents Alex points at her bathing suit and waves his hand across his nose; Stink. Mouths: EWWWWWWW.

EMILY  
MOMMMMMMM-

Sarah turns--

ALEX  
(interrupting)  
Why's the women line always longer?

SARAH  
Because we have way more to discuss  
in there. Em, keep me company,  
would ya?

Emily stays with her mom.

Grant searches his sons face, desperate to connect.

GRANT  
Son, everything okay?

Their eyes meet briefly before Alex looks away.

GRANT (CONT'D)  
I don't know about you but my legs  
could use a break.

They sit on a bench, water droplets glistening on their skin.

GRANT  
So tell me what going on? Is it mom  
and I's situation?

Tears well up in Alex's eyes.  
Grant takes a deep breath. A beat...

GRANT (CONT'D)  
I want you to know that what's been  
happening between me and your mom,  
it's not you or your sisters fault.  
It's grown-up stuff we're going to  
work through. I've been to therapy,  
trying to become a better dad -- a  
better person. I miss us being  
together; you guys mean the world  
to me.

(teary-eyed)  
More than anything, I want us all  
to be happy again. Maybe on your  
ride home you can put in a good  
word for your ole man.

Alex chuckles. His young face thoughtful as he processes.

ALEX

Maybe.

(beat, then excited)

IF YOU SURVIVE THE VORTEX!

They laugh. Grant hugs his son tight.  
He gives his son a deep look, reads him...

GRANT

Wait, how could I have missed it? I  
know that look, I had it at ya age.

Alex looks up, a glimpse of excitement--

GRANT (CONT'D)

Bianca Johnson. Sixth grade. Asked  
her to be my girl and she said  
she'd think about it over the  
summer. First day back, I run down  
the hall, search the school, ask  
all our friends 'wheres Bianca" and  
no one knew. I mean this girl was  
the top of the class. Your grandma  
bought me a new school outfit to  
wear my first day back. I wore it  
two weeks straight hoping to run  
into Bianca. Well on the third  
week, guess who shows up? You  
guessed it. And guess what, that  
white shirt that I wore every day  
hoping to look my best when I see  
her... well the pits were yellow,  
and maybe I should of washed the  
shirt because when she saw me, she  
ran in the other direction and  
never spoke to me again.

ALEX

How'd you know {it was a girl  
problem}?

GRANT

You've got your fathers looks. Some  
issues you just can't avoid. But  
Look, my suggestion, lets enjoy the  
rest of your birthday, conquer this  
Vortex and leave this place with  
your chest out. Chicks love a dude  
with confidence.



...LATER...

Grant, Sarah, Alex, and Emily navigate the park, each in their own world.

SARAH

You want to do the Lazy river next?

EMILY

Yeah, mom, please! That's the "thing to do" on tik-tok.

GRANT

You have a tik-tok?

Emily points to Sarah accusingly:

EMILY

Mom said I could?

GRANT

You permitted this?

SARAH

(sarcasm)

She's talented. Why shouldn't she have a platform?

Grant leaves it alone. He stays focused on the mission:

GRANT

Buddy, what's next on your list?

Grant's phone starts buzzing--

ALEX

Aqua Vortex!

GRANT

You sure you can handle that?

ALEX

I'm not the one afraid of heights.

GRANT

It's your big day, what better day to conquer that fear. Let's make it memorable. So Vortex it is!

ALEX

Moms not coming?

GRANT

Sarah?

SARAH  
That's a man thing.

ALEX  
Are we ever going to do anything as  
a family?!

His phone rings again! He grabs it this time.

SARAH  
I see we still have a plus one.

GRANT  
(regretfully)  
I gotta take this.

ALEX  
Dad, you promised you'd go on the  
Vortex with me!

GRANT  
I know, I know. I promise, it won't  
take long, bud...  
(into phone:)  
Yeah...

Grant walks away. Sarah shoots him a stern look before walking off with both children.

SARAH  
I'll get on the Vortex with you.

Alex looks back at his dad, hopeful.

ALEX  
Dad's a changed man, we can take  
him at his word now.

INT. ACTION ZONE WATERPARK RESTAURANT

Eyes red, hair wet and wrinkled fingers, Alex, Sarah and Emily grab at the Pizza...

Sarah's phone rests on her lap. She secretly calls Grant, but the call drops. She has full reception.

EMILY  
I can't wait for the cake!

Just then, restaurant staff gathers around the table, holding a small birthday cake adorned with candles.

STAFF  
(singing in unison)  
Happy Birthday to you...

Sarah records the special moment with her phone...

UNKNOWN WATERPARK LOCATION

Grant wanders around with his phone in the air, desperate for reception.

GRANT  
Come on, just a bar of signal...

He moves to different spots, his frustration mounting.

INT. ACTION ZONE WATERPARK RESTAURANT - SAME

Sarah still records...

SARAH  
Make-a-wish sweetheart...

Alex closes his eyes and blows out the candles...

EMILY  
Where's dad?

Sarah's eyes fill with tears. She puts a comforting arm around Emily, who doesn't seem to care that Grant's not there. She's eager to eat cake.

...LATER...

EMILY  
Hurry up buttface, the parks about to close.

ALEX  
Mom, can we please do the Vortex?  
Maybe dads there waiting.

EMILY  
Where'd he zone off to?

SARAH  
I'm sure your fathers got a good reason to be missing, he knows how important birthdays are.

EMILY

Uh-uh. He said they're just another day you use to milk him for his pennies.

SARAH

(taken aback)

He said that?

Emily senses she may be in trouble so she shrugs.

ALEX

He's probably at the Vortex waiting.

EMILY

Dad? Ha!

ALEX

Can you call him please?

Sarah calls and puts it on speaker- before it rings his machine comes on. Alex deflates.

ALEX

I guess we could leave.

EMILY

We're not waiting for dad?

ALEX

Fuck dad.

EMILY

Ouuuuuuu.

He knocks her plate to the floor.

SARAH

Alex!

His eyes well with tears. Sarah knows Alex is taking his frustrations out on Emily.

His eyes say he's not, but his mouth says:

ALEX

Sorry.

Sarah holds back her emotions.

SUPER: 8:56

The three of them walk with their towels around their necks.

EXT. WATER PARK - EVENING

Grant's frustration mounts as he roams the water park, still unable to find reception on his phone. He checks it repeatedly, hoping for even a single bar of signal.

GRANT

This can't be happening.

Rain clouds gather and cast a shadow over the park. His unease deepens as he gazes up at the sky.

GRANT

Not rain, God, please...

INT. WATERPARK - SOUVERNIOR SHOP - LATER

Sarah waits in line while her Alex and Emily gather a ton of candy and put it in plastic to be weighed.

SARAH

Guys, your teeth...come on, Al...

ALEX

It's my birthday.

She turns to Emily...

SARAH

What's your excuse?

EMILY

It's his birthday.

The rain starts as a drizzle and turns to a heavy downpour...  
....The windows rattle from the force of the storm...

EXT. WATER PARK

Guests are running to shelter.

Grant's desperation intensifies as he roams the park, drenched from the rain. Thunder rumbles in the distance, drowning his voice as he yells out for his family:

GRANT

Sarah! Alex! Emily!

EXT. WATERPARK - EXACT LOCATION IS UNKOWN

Sarah looks at her phone and sees several missed calls from Grant.

SARAH  
(to herself)  
Finally.

She calls him back.

GRANT (V.O.)  
Sarah, can you hear me? Where are  
you guys?

SARAH  
Grant. Grant.

GRANT (V.O.)  
Can you hear me?

SARAH GRANT  
Now I can. Sarah.

The line goes dead, Sarah stares at her phone.

EXT. WATER PARK - SAME

Grants walking by the Aqua Vortex. He admires it.  
The slide is a stunning visual spectacle, a breathtaking  
combination of clear and dark sections. Some parts of the  
tube were crafted from crystal-clear fiberglass, other  
sections were shrouded in darkness.

But this is what he came for!

Grant spots the Ride Attendant closing up the entrance of the  
Aqua Vortex with a rope.  
HMMMMMM... He gets an idea.  
He glances around to ensure nobody's watching, then checks  
his phone.

...Grant hops the rope and climbs the flight of stairs  
leading to the entrance.

The higher he ascends, the slower he walks, each step a  
careful choice.  
He's careful not to look over the bannister at whats below...

## AQUA VORTEX RIDE

The rain pelts against him as he reaches the TOP.  
 He nervously clenches to the railing.  
 Sweat beads all over his face...  
 His vision narrows...  
 His breath - short, shallow gasps.  
 He fights to anchor himself...  
 Mouths: One, two, three, four...  
 Then slowly his breath steadies...  
 Tightens his fanny pack...  
 He smiles. Then takes a step forward...

He takes out his GoPro camera and Selfie stick...  
 Mounts the Gopro to his head...  
 Places his phone on the selfie stick...  
 He tucks his t-shirt in his trunks, takes a deep breath...  
 ...and SCREAMS:

GRANT

Fuck yea!

Proud he conquered his fear....  
 Grant steps in the pool of water, sits and holds on with one hand. He presses the record button and adjusts the phone to capture his perspective. He looks into the GoPro:

GRANT

Hey, champ, it's your dad. I did it  
 buddy, I fuckin did it! -- Sorry,  
 don't use that word.

Grant raises the GoPro, gets an aerial view of where he is...

GRANT (CONT'D)

I know you love this slide. Happy  
 birthday, buddy! You're growing up  
 so fast... {I} promise we'll  
 celebrate once I find you guys.

He blinks back tears and gives a reassuring 'thumbs up' to the camera...He pushes himself--

**INSIDE AQUA VORTEX**

Darkness envelops him as he twists through the slide. Water rushes around him. He reaches the first curve and pauses, fumbling to activate the GoPro camera mounted on his chest...

His camera records the exhilarating journey, capturing the wild twists and turns in a blur of colors and water--

Anticipation should carry him through the next looping section but something is terribly wrong: the expected rush of momentum is absent--

Instead, he's left suspended on the edge of the loop.  
*(like a gymnast caught on the uneven bars, where his upper body dangles while his lower half's suspended above him)*

GRANT

No, no no! What's happening?

His heart pounds in his chest as he tries to twist his body to use his hands and feet propel himself forward. No fucking luck, it's literally an uphill battle--

He tries to use his arms to pull his lower body over the loops edge and slide to survival...

...But every attempt to regain momentum is met with failure since the slick surface refuses him any leverage...

GRANT

No, no, no!

Pain surges through his limbs...

GRANT

Oh, fuck! Hello! Help! Somebody help me!

His body jerks as he tries to maneuver upward. The narrow space wedges his body into an uncomfortable angle.

He presses his hand against the tube, but it's not enough space... breathes...tries Again...luck is worst this time...

Fear courses through him, and the realization sinks in that he's immobilized, wedged like a cork.

EXT. ACTION ZONE WATERPARK - PARKING LOT

Sarah, Alex, and Emily make their way to the car.

INT. SARAH'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

They're soaked from the downpour. Their earlier excitement has been replaced with concern for Grant's absence.

Emily sits in the backseat, Alex in the front passenger seat, and Sarah behind the wheel. Sarah's worried expression deepens as she checks her phone, still unable to reach Grant.



EMILY  
Mom, where's dad?

ALEX  
(sarcastic)  
Work.

SARAH  
He should of been back by now.

Alex, disappointed, gazes out the windshield at the rain drenched park...

ALEX  
What if he got somewhere stuck in  
the park?

EMILY  
Or even worse -- had an episode!

Sarah's mind races. Plagued with anxiety.

SARAH  
Let's pray not.

EMILY  
Can I have my phone?

SARAH  
He'll call soon. Maybe he's just  
caught in the rain.

Sarah looks at the long line of cars inching forward.

SARAH  
It'll take forever to get out of  
here.  
(whispers to herself)  
God, please let him be okay.

Her car crawls through the parking lot.

INT. AQUA VORTEX

Grant falls. He's now on his back with his feet pointing towards the loop. To ascend, he'd need the flexibility of a serpent, snaking his way upward.

Grant looks at his phone - no reception.  
Battery's on 50 percent. He turns his screen down.  
His voice trembles:

GRANT  
Think, think, think!

As he fights to maintain his composure, a new element joins the torment – the rain intensifies outside, sending heavy droplets drumming onto the slides surface.

GRANT  
...What? No!

The pitter-patter of raindrops transforms into a constant rhythm -- the impact echoing through the slide. Droplets seep through tiny cracks in the slide's walls, forming miniature streams that begin to trickle down...

...one by one, right between his eyes, as he lies on his back, pensive. This space now becomes even more claustrophobic.

GRANT  
Shit shit shit....  
(shivers)  
Stay strong Grant... you have to.  
This won't beat you. I can't be  
stuck here.

He searches for some sign of hope or a design flaw. He holds back tears...

GRANT  
HELP! SOMEBODY HELP ME PLEASE!!!!!!  
(BEAT...SCREAM again)  
HELPPPPPPPPP! HELLO!

His words barely make it past the tube walls.

GRANT  
Help!!!!!!

INT. SARAH'S CAR

Sarah inches forward in the long line of vehicles making its slow exit out of the Waterpark. Rain still falls.

Emily is absorbed in her phone. Sarah keeps her focus on the road, tense.

Alex, gazes out window. As they pass a certain point, he turns his head and catches sight of the Aqua Vortex.

ALEX  
When are we coming back?

SARAH  
Next season when the weather's  
better. Promise.

EMILY  
(teasing)  
Maybe Dad can come next time.

ALEX  
(out of nowhere)  
Dad doesn't love us, does he? Is  
that why you left him?

SARAH  
(beat)  
Your father loves you very much.

ALEX  
You say that but we don't see it.

EMILY  
Mom, can I buy a Toka-Boka house?

ALEX  
I don't know why he even bothers to  
come around.

Sarah looks at Alex through the rearview. He looks crushed.

SARAH  
We all know how much he hates being  
alone.

Suddenly the rain comes down HARDER than ever. Thunder and  
Lightening jolts them.

INT. AQUA VORTEX - SAME

Rain pounds against the waterslides fiberglass surface.

Grant's breathing accelerates as he remains hopeful in the  
circular casket.

He lies within the tight confines of the tube, his body  
wedged in an awkward angle. He can't move more than a few  
inches in either direction.

He desperately tries to free himself, his muscles straining  
against the unforgiving slide:

GRANT  
Move dammit, move!

Each attempt only intensifies his sense of helplessness.

He tries his best to relax and conserve his strength. Patience and effort worked before, so why not again--

Suddenly, a thunderous rush of water surges down the slide. All Grant can do brace himself. His heart pounds in the narrow tube as he lies wedged, immobile and drenched.

GRANT  
(struggling to breath)  
No...no!

The water roars around him, rising dangerously high, submerging him for agonizing seconds. He gasps for air -- able to snag a breath... His limbs thrashing as he fights to pull his head above water...

His vision blurs... he chokes on some water. His SCREAM become MUTE as the rain transforms the slide into a cold, watery prison...

Finally his head breaks the water as it rinses away...

He fights for air...

After a moment he realizes he has a little more motion in left side...

He regains his senses and becomes aware of a warm stickiness on his face. He touches his forehead with his left hand, his fingers coming away smeared with blood.

The darkness of the slide makes it difficult to see as he tries to find the source of the bleeding.

GRANT  
Come on Grant, think, think, think.  
FUCKKKKKK! Let me out!

He's on the verge of tears, but he holds them back. For a moment he just stares...

...Then his heart leaps when he hears a faint beep from his cell phone. He glances at the screen and sees a small bar indicating a hint of reception...

He fumbles with the phone. Careful not to let it fall in this confined space.

His trembling fingers tapping the number, 9...1...1 For a moment, there's a glimmer of hope as the call connects--

OPERATOR  
911, what your emergency?

GRANT  
Hello. Hello. I'm at Action--  
hello?

OPERATOR  
9-1--

GRANT (CONT'D)	OPERATOR
I'm trapped in a slide in a	--hello?!
tube. The aqua vortex--	(breaking up)
	...I'm sorry.. could ..you
	Please hold--

GRANT  
What?! No, no! I need help!

-- His excitement quickly fades as the signal weakens and the operator's voice becomes garbled and distant.

Grant frantically tries to explain his situation,

GRANT  
...Hello, I'm at Action Zone  
Waterpark! Inside ...

...But the call deteriorates further...

The cell phone's screen goes dark and the bar for reception disappears.

Grant turns on his stomach. It's painful, but necessary. As he maneuvers, the blood from his head stains the tube. (**this will be a reminder to the marks of where he was to wheres he's going - his progress**)

... The pounding rain has become an eerie symphony...

Grant, on his stomach, arms uncomfortable, taking measured breaths inside this circular coffin.

Amid the downpour, he hears something else in the distance - a haunting sound, like a mournful wailing...

He pins his ear to the tube. The sound grows louder and more distinct. It sounds like thunder but it's more rhythmic...

A gleam of hope in his eyes...helicopter, maybe?

But then, the dreadful noise reveals itself. It's a monstrous waterpump, churning and spewing water - this is maintenance equipment.

He bangs as hard as he can, hoping to be heard, but there's no one there...Eventually he gives up and the Waterpump finishes its cycle.

**Super 1:16AM (2hrs to survival)**

STILL RAINING.

Grant, on his back, shivering.

The relentless dripping of water onto his head, like a cruel form of waterboarding, adds to his torment.

These rhythmic drops, echo in this narrow tube. They've become a relentless drumbeat in his mind -- unending symphony of misery.

With a strained voice:

GRANT  
(delirious)  
Stop... please, stop...

His plea changes nothing...

GRANT  
Stay...stay sane Grant...

He switches his selfie stick to his other hand and realizes his hands are wrinkled and bruised.

GRANT  
Is this my punishment!?!? Really?!!

He YELLS with frustration!

GRANT  
MAKE IT STOP! PLEASE JUST MAKE IT  
STOP!

He goes to give GOD the 'middle finger', but this space is so confined that at the position he's in he can't raise his hands above his waist.

His nervous laughs echo through the tube.

He lies there a moment. Not like he has a choice, but he takes it in. This drastic time testing his patience.

With trembling hands, Grant struggles to peel his soaked shirt from his shivering body. The fabric clings to his skin like a second layer of skin.

He contorts his body, fighting against the cramped space that presses in on him. He fights for breath as he struggles to remove his shirt. Every inch is a battle.

He turns on the GoPro and flips the screen around facing him so he can use that as light. He looks around the narrow tube, seeking any available anchor point.

Sweat beads on his forehead as his shirt finally comes free, leaving his upper body exposed to the cold, damp environment. His limbs trembling.

He glances up the slide's curving walls, imagining using the fabric as a makeshift rope to pull himself upward. But the slide's slick surface and his limited range of motion pose formidable challenges.

Summoning his remaining strength, he extends the shirt towards a slightly curvy, uneven section of the slide's wall. His fingers fumble, the wet fabric slipping from his grasp repeatedly. SHIT!

Grant takes a deep breath and begins maneuvering the fabric into position. He ties knots, twists folds, and secures the shirt as best he can, his fingers clumsy from pain and exhaustion.

He tries AGAIN! This time he manages to loop the shirt around the slight protrusion. He pulls with every ounce of strength left -- the shirt acting as a makeshift rope. But the slide's slick surface defies his efforts. Another failed attempt.

His crushed spirit weeps. His muscles ache and his body is depleted. He's close to breaking.

With a heavy heart he relinquishes grip on the shirt, letting it slip through his fingers.

GRANT

I don't deserve this! Somebody help  
me please!!

Grant tries to calm himself but has little success doing so.

The GoPro's light diminishes. Now he's back in darkness -- just him and the sounds of the night.

Another desperate cry for help:

GRANT

Please help me, somebody!!! HELP!

But these words don't make it beyond the tube as we quickly CUT TO an AERIAL shot of the section on the tube where we hear NOTHING HE SCREAMS...

AQUA VORTEX - LATER

With a burst of pent-up rage, he kicks with all his might. It ain't much because it's tight as fuck in here...

His foot throbs with pain from the force of the blow, but Grant doesn't relent. He lashes out again and again, each kick a declaration of sorts...

The slide trembles with each kick, and his relentless assault echoes through the tube. Yet, despite his efforts, its walls stand strong against his furious onslaught.

GRANT

Come on you bastard. You fucking bastard!

Now he's kicking with both feet, fueled by frustration.

With each failed kick his frustration weakens.

He stops. All out of strength, barely any hope...

GRANT

Save the air.

He takes shorter, and slower breaths...

As if in response to the his despair his phone suddenly vibrates. Startling him.

His hands tremble as he maneuvers to take it from his pocket. But his weakened grip betrays him. The phone slips out his grasps and tumbles down the slide past his feet where the glow of the screen fades.

GRANT

(desperation)

No, no, no!

He painfully slides down the slide as the phone inches further away with each vibration.

GRANT

Please not now.

The vibration becomes more pronounced. He stops the phone from moving with the ball of his heel.



And thats when that familiar, THUNDEROUS ROAR fills the tube AGAIN--

A RUSH of water relentlessly surges through the slide, threatening to carry the phone away forever.

In a desperate, heart-pounding moment, he lunges his arms forward. He inadvertently swallows a mouthful of water before his hand barely clenches the phone before it's gone forever.

... Relieved, he secures it safely in his fanny pack ...

...But the current brings something else in... quite an uninvited guest: a startled, long tailed RAT lands on his chest...

For a moment theres a tense stillness between the two as they lock eyes. Neither dares to make the first move.

The rat stays perched on his chest... until it decides to head towards his crotch.

Grant kicks wildly trying to prevent it from venturing any further... and eventually he wins... finally he's succeeded at something.

His chest HEAVES frantically.

...And for a few moments theres silence other than the relentless rain beating this fiberglass.

...But his luck is never that good...

...theres the sound of tiny footsteps... stoping and going... stopping and going... and now getting closer...

He scans the slide for signs of the Rat...

Then SUDDENLY, the scratching sound near his face sends him into a frenzy...

GRANT

Get away! Get away from me!!!

He still can't see it but he's just felt the tail tap his face.

Blind paranoia takes hold as he claws at the air, trying to protect himself from this invisible pest.

But then, as if it's mocking him, the Rat emerges just inches from his face, teeth showing...

Grant panics and attempts to SWIPE it away ...

GRANT  
AHHHHH! Get off me! Go!

His hand makes contact with the Rat and in response it lashes out at him - it's tiny jaws snapping in defense. It makes contact--

GRANT  
AHHHH! DAMmIT!

The mouse scurries away, proud of its defense.

Grant takes out his GoPro to shed some light on his hand: it's a small wound; however, it's painful and bleeding.

Grant takes slow and deliberate breaths to preserve the precious air. He inhales through his nose and slowly out his mouth...

GRANT  
Easy... easy... Conserve. Stay calm  
and conserve air. You're getting  
outta here, buddy.

...He spots a small opening in the slide, they all have them, but it's hard to see in the dark. But it's a potential source of fresh air, it's where the rain slides in...

He thinks. Fuck it. It's a long shot. He slides to the small opening. Every inch hurts...

He takes his GoPro (which has a textured surface) and uses the casing as a makeshift lever. He applies some pressure, careful not to break it while widening the gap enough to let in a sufficient breath of air.

Seconds feel like hours...

The small opening finally widens and he can feel a rush of cool air flow in. Finally, a tiny victory!

He suffocates the gap with his mouth... pulls back...

GRANT  
Yes. YES.

It's like the fresh air has sharpened his focus...

Grant decides to leave the GoPro lodged in the opening. It's a risky move, but he realizes that he can use the camera's recording function to document his ordeal while also allowing it to capture the precious flow of air.

He positions the camera to face him...hits record... He's teeth are jittery, he's shivering and His Voice is strained:

GRANT

Hi. I'm Grant Nathaniel Dobbins. I don't know if anyone will ever see this. My hope is, you won't. But I'm stuck. Inside this coffin of a waterslide. I don't even know how long its been. But it was daylight when I got in here. Today was supposed to be a celebration of life, but I umm... It's my son's birthday. Alex.

Grant waves as if Alex is watching.

I shouldn't be talking because I feel the air escaping. I'm battered, claustrophobic, been bitten by a wild animal... But luckily my blood sugar, has been maintaining.

(chuckles)

Thats a good thing right?

He holds up his hands, exposing his wounds.

But I'm coming back for- for them: my wife, my children. I love you, guys. A lot. More than I showed or ever could...I want you to know my heart meant to make things better, even if my actions never caught up.

He face freezes up with tears... A beat. Then:

GRANT

Hail Mary, mother of God, pray for our sinners as we forgive those who trespassed against us. Blessed are thou' among women, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil and grant me the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

He makes the sign of the cross over his chest and stops the recording.

Grant takes a moment to have a moment...

This is not how he wants to die.

His face changes and suddenly it's as if he's mustering up the strength, courage and wisdom to make a move--

Grant presses his palms against the slick walls, and his legs kick out desperately...he GRUNTS and musters up all the strength he's ever had...

No luck... He tries again...

GRANT

COME ON.

This unforgiving design mixed with his hazardous position make his efforts feeble at best. There's no room to maneuver. All the twists and curves work against him.

GRANT

GOD!!!

HIS FRUSTRATION MOUNTS!

GRANT

Damn it!

He tries again. His hands and feet slip and slide on the slick surface... Panic bubbling within him...

He gives up for the moment...his Breathing strains...

GRANT

FUCKKKK!

The slide's cruel geometry prevails.  
He bangs his fist against the surface and injures his hand.

The IMPACT causes the GoPro to fall from the lodged opening.  
There goes his fresh air supply...

Mad at himself and defeated:

GRANT

It's no use.

Grant SCREAMS with all the air in his lungs!

He reaches up and grabs his GoPro. His trembling hands struggle to hold it steady. He turns it towards his face and hits record. A red light blinking to life.

For a moment he stares at the lens, trying not to cry. Desperation etched on his face. He blinks away the moisture in his eyes. Voice still cracking:

GRANT

HEY... I ummm... I want to say  
goodbye. I love you all so much...  
Sarah...Alex...Em... Im so sorry.  
I'm sorry for everything, I  
promise. If I get out of this,  
maybe I can, I can make things  
right.

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

But ummm, I'm probably not going to make it, so try and keep all the good memories of me alive. Okay?

He stares in the camera a beat, then shuts it off.

MOMENTS LATER...

Grant's hands, slick with moisture and his own sweat, claw into the slide's interior surface...

His fingers splay wide, searching for any minute crevice or imperfection that can provide a grip...

He presses his palms against the curved walls, seeking traction that barely exists...

Simultaneously, his feet, in swim shoes, push off from the opposite side of the slide. He flexes his toes, driving the swim shoes into the tube's surface...

His effort is relentless.

His body moves inch by agonizing inch. His muscles burn with exertion...

But he's making gains. Small, but progressive, nonetheless.

Grueling. Sheer determination alone carries him upward to where there's a small pocket of visibility built into the fiberglass...he Can't make himself look out of it. His fear of heights overcoming him.

Instead he decides to lay his soaked shirt down on the surface, trying to create a makeshift friction pad.

He positions himself atop the shirt, bare skin against the fabric, and takes a deep breath.

Then he puts his hands firmly on the slide, fingers splayed wide, and attempts to use them as momentum generators.

He thrusts himself forward, trying to harness the friction between his hands and the fabric to propel himself through the loop.

But the slides surface disrespects his efforts...

GRANT

Come on...

(grunts)

COME ON!

He tries again... and again... and even again...

GRANT

AHHHHHH!

The result? A back full of painful scrapes and abrasions, inflicted by the friction against the slide -- the shirt did him no good...

GRANT

Damn it!

He pauses and catches his breath. Defeated.

Grant lies there and cries. All of his emotions are released.

...LATER...

GRANT

HELP!!! HELP!!!! H-H-...

His once measured breaths, now come in shallow gasps. He's struggling for oxygen.

His vision blurs. Oxygen deprivation takes hold. Colors distort, and everything becomes a dizzying whirlwind.

INT. ALEX BEDROOM - SAME

Alex lies in bed, unable to sleep. Tonight, there's an emptiness that looms over him. He stares at the ceiling, his thoughts consumed by the absence of his father.

Alex flips through his cell phone pictures. Staring at the last picture of him and his dad.

Tears glisten in Alex's eyes, and anger simmers beneath the surface. He pulls his pillow closer, clutching it tightly as if it were a lifeline. His dad, his hero, had promised to be there for his birthday celebration, and yet, he wasn't.

ALEX

(whispers)

I just don't understand.

The room is filled with the weight of silence as Alex wrestles with his emotions. He's dying to understand, but he's just a child, struggling to make sense of these complex adult decisions.

ALEX

Where are you, Dad?

Frustration bubbles up within, and he clenches his fists. He wants to scream, to shout at the unfairness of it all.

ALEX

This just isn't fair! It's not  
fair!

He wipes away a stray tear.

AQUA VORTEX

Grant lies in the darkness. Eyes closed, body limp -  
exhausted...

SUDDENLY, his body tenses, and his limbs begin to convulse  
uncontrollably.

His eyes snap open, wide with fear, but his muscles are  
betraying him. A seizure takes hold, and he can't stop it.

Water splashes around him as his arms and legs jerk  
erratically.

He bites down hard on his lip to stifle any cries of pain.

His head knocks against the slides walls, adding to the  
torment.

GRANT

N-n-no...stop.

He fumbles with his fanny pack and retrieves his phone...  
But the screen flashes Water Damage...

GRANT

N-No. NO!

His vision starts to blur. Fear swims through him as he  
battles the seizure...

...But as quickly as it began it starts to subside. It leaves  
him gasping -- mind reeling and muscles aching...

He lies there, shaken and vulnerable... Phone beside him...

Grants weakened and disoriented.

As he gathers his composure, he becomes aware of this  
roaring, rumbling sound. It grows louder, vibrating through  
the slide. Panic overtakes him.

Droplets of rain begin to pour into the slide from a small  
crevice above. It's fast, heavy and urgent...

He scrambles for his phone, but the screen flickers and dims.

And to make matters worse, the winds generated by the storm are causing the Aqua Vortex to sway back and forth.

Grant struggles to maintain his composure and keep his stomach in check:

GRANT

Hold on...Just hold--

A hard gust of wind shifts the tube, causing an assault on his stomach.

He clenches his gut and as the rocking intensifies, so does his nausea.

GRANT

No, no more

His stomach rebels further, and he starts to retch, his throat burning with bile. He fights the urge to vomit but loses--

--It spills from his mouth, mixing with the rainwater that fills the slide. The gross mixture washes over his face.

He's weakened, staring at his reflection through the puddle of water in the tube. He looks like shit.

...LATER...

Grant positions the GoPro towards his face. The wide-angle captures his haggard expression. Into the camera:

GRANT

If anyone...if anyone sees this,  
I'm trapped. I don't know where I  
am. --No, I do I'm in a  
rollercoaster. I'm hungry.

(tears forming)

I'm cold, and Im afraid I'm going  
to die. I don't have my medicine. I  
just miss my family. I need  
help...Please, someone,

(SCREAMS)

ANYONE!!!!..Help Me get outta here.  
I can't take much more of this.

His hope is diminishing...

...Battered and damn near broken, he awakens from an uneasy slumber. His phone glows with a faint, yet, promising light.



The once-damaged phone now appears to be functioning...do We have hope?

He keeps his phone still, holding his breath so he won't lose the one bar of reception he has.

Slowly dials 9-1-1...

...it rings... then someone answers..

DISPATCHER (V.O.)  
911, what's your emergency?

GRANT  
Hello? Hello, I'm-- my name is  
Grant Delaney, I'm-I'm  
trapped...trapped In a tube slide-  
a waterslide. Please, please help  
me!

For a moment, there's nothing but the sound of his racing heart. Then, a voice crackles through the phone, filled with reassurance and urgency:

DISPATCHER (V.O.)  
Can you describe your surroundings?  
Anything that might help us to  
locate you?

GRANT  
I don't know! I can't see a damn  
thing in here. Just send someone,  
please!

DISPATCHER (V.O.)  
I understand you're scared, sir,  
but we need all the details we can  
get. Can you recall any distinctive  
sounds or landmarks from your  
surroundings?

GRANT  
Can't you track my phone?

DISPATCHER (V.O.)  
Sir-

GRANT  
It's dark. I'm a hundred feet in  
the air, in a tube. A water-ride.  
The Class Action Park or some shit--

DISPATCHER  
What town are you in?

GRANT  
Jackson. Jackson, New Jersey. I  
think.

DISPATCHER  
Can you tell me if you feel any  
movement?

GRANT  
Yes, it's shaking!

DISPATCHER  
Sir I hear pounding. Can you turn  
down your background?

Grant tries to slide up, but then he realizes, it's the rain  
thudding and he can't do anything about it.

GRANT  
I'm stuck in a waterslide, not  
throwing a fucking party! Can't you  
hear the rain? There's nothing I  
can do about it!

GRANT  
Please help me--

DISPATCHER  
It's hard to hear you over the  
noise in the back--

GRANT  
(had enough!)  
The rain is getting in! I'm running  
out of breath! Please--

A beat...we hear the dispatcher type something...

DISPATCHER  
You're not alone, we're locating--

The line crackles with static and the connection is abruptly  
severed. His heart sinks

GRANT  
No, no, no!

He goes to redial 9-1-1 but there's no reception. He shouts  
into the darkness:

GRANT  
You can't leave me here!

...moments later...

With all his might, Grant starts to crawl, inching his way through the tight confines of the tube.

He crawls towards this looming loop.

As he reaches the base of the loop, he realizes the impossibility of climbing it. But he's desperate. He slides his body upward, using his arms to propel him inch, by inch.

Suddenly the surface of the slide becomes slicker and he feels himself slipping backwards--

GRANT

No, no, no!

He clings desperately to the loops curve. But his grips no match for gravity.

In this second it seems he's defeated...

...But he summons that "life or death" strength, searching for any irregularity or crevice in the slide that he could grab a grip of...

HE FINDS ONE! It's tiny, and it's a miracle--

-- And without hesitation he jams his two fingers (pointer and middle) so deep inside that the pressure threatens to break his bones.

He stops for a moment to absorb the pain.

GRANT

Hold on, goddammit. Hold...

That manages to halt his slide down the loop, though its excruciatingly painful.

He's suspended in an unreliable position, but it keeps him from sliding back down to where he was...

...We follow him climb some more. He reaches a juncture where he'd have to be spider-man to ascend this part of the loop... He contemplates the best human way to conquer it...

GRANT

Ok, Grant. Think this through...

He studies it, calculating the challenge ahead of him...

He takes a deep breath, plants his feet firmly against the curved surface and extends his arms, searching for any handhold.

...And although it's dark as hell at this section his fingers find a tiny groove...

The rainwater slides down, blurring his vision...

Grant pulls himself upward.

\*the Camera captures the tension in his muscles...

GRANT  
{you can do this} ...For them...

...But theres this noise again...no, not the pounding from outside, he's grown used to that... this is rhythmic vibration...

He's uncomfortable as fuck...

...Yet that vibration persists... He strains his ears trying to pinpoint the source...

And like a dream, a voice cuts through the darkness--

ALEX (V.O.)  
Dad? Dad are you there?

Grant's eyes widen in disbelief...

The CAMERA PANS DOWN and reveals the source of this miraculous connection -- the mouse, now perched atop the speaker button on his phone, its tiny paws having accidentally answered the call.

GRANT  
(hopeful, shouting)  
Alex, it's dad! It's me buddy. I can hear you!

...but his words are lost in the slide. They never reach his sons ears...

INTERCUT -  
Alex in bed. Anger rests on his face. He clutches his phone...

ALEX  
Dad, can you hear me?

All Alex can hear is an echo...

GRANT  
(shouts)  
Alex, it's me! Dad!

ALEX  
 ...Okay, you're doing this again!

GRANT  
 No, son. (Alex. I'm here, I can hear you)

ALEX  
 (over)  
 I don't even know why you pretend to love us.

GRANT  
 Wait no!

Grant tears up... Contemplates letting go to grab the phone...Meanwhile the rat dances on the phone...

ALEX  
 Dad, are you even listening? You're always promising things, but you never keep your word! You're a liar, Dad! You promised you'd be here for my birthday, and where are you? Huh? Nowhere! You ruin everything, Dad! You ruined my birthday! I hate you!

Tears stream down Alex's face as he pours out his pent-up emotions - Years of unfulfilled promises bearing down on his shoulders.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 I can't count on you for anything!None Of us can. You're never there when we need you. Mom cries herself to sleep because of you, and Emily... she's scared, Dad, scared because her hero's never around! You're not a hero, you're just a disappointment! I really used to look up to you, Dad. I used to believe you when you said you'd change, that you'd be there for us. But now I see the truth. You'll never change, and I don't need you! We don't need you!

Alex's phone's screen reflects the wet tracks left by his tears.

Grant's crying. Heartbroken.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I know why Mom left you. You're too obsessed with work, always on your stupid phone, like it's more important than us! She said she would of dealt with it if you hadn't been such a failure, always playing catch-up.

Grant's strength dwindles and he succumbs to exhaustion. He slips down the tube. Body limp, spirit defeated.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Her new boyfriend leaves his phone in the car when we're out. He's actually around and there for us. He's opposite of you -- silly and fun, not just serious all the time. Mom deserves someone who actually cares about her. Just know we all hate you.

Alex hangs up.

Grant surrenders to the harsh reality of his situation. Yearning for his family and a life he might never return to.

...Grant lies here. Deflated and defeated...

...Moments Later...

Grant lies on his back, staring at the rains water trickling down the slide. He scoops some of the water into his cupped palms.

The rain has pooled the tube, forming small puddles, some of them tainted with rat feces.

His desperation has driven him to the point where he's willing to do the unimaginable.

He picks away some feces with his hand and cups a pool of water with his hands. He brings it to his parched lips as his face contorts with disgust.

He slowly extends his tongue, tentatively tasting the water...

He holds his breath and does the unimaginable - he drinks it.

His body reacts violently. He suppresses the urge to vomit...

...As his body and spirit continue to deteriorate, he drifts into a vivid **flashback**:

EXT. PARK - A FEW MONTHS AGO (FLASHBACK)

Grant sits on a checkered picnic blanket in a lush, green park. The sun shines bright as the sounds of children playing fill the air.

Sarah's beside him; Alex and Emily, are giggling as they chase each other around the slide.

Grant watches with a warm smile, his eyes filled with love and contentment. He reaches for a sandwich, and as he takes a bite, he looks at Sarah:

GRANT

Our family is everything to me.

Sarah leans in and kisses him--

CUT TO:

BACK TO REALITY

Suddenly, there's a rumble, and the tube starts to vibrate. His heart races with a spark of hope. His eyes are heavy with fatigue.

Grant can feel the tube shaking beneath him. He looks and notices a flickering light in the distance. It's a glow, growing brighter with each passing second.

...His eyes widen with anticipation. Could it be rescue workers?

As the light approaches, it becomes clear that it's not a rescue team but a swarm of fireflies...

They fill the tube with a soft glow, casting a warm and comforting light throughout...

He watches as they create a makeshift constellation within the slide...

For a second, Grant forgets about his situation and is enamored by the enchanting sight.

The tube pulses with a soothing rhythm, and the drip of water becomes a gentle backdrop to the natural light show...

Is he hallucinating?

Just as he finds solace a blinding bolt of lightning strikes the tube. It's DEFENING; it reverberates through the slide. It causes Grant to flinch.

The tube shudders from the impact and the fireflies scatter.

Once again, Grant's left in the darkness.

Despair covers him... but a glimmer of hope remains...

He takes a moment to assess his surroundings.  
The tube, though dark and narrow, is his only lifeline.  
He must use it to his advantage.

This time, Grant crawls down the tube in the opposite direction - on his back, moving feet first. His fingers brush the tubes ceiling as he searches for anything to help him escape.

After what feels like an eternity in hell, Grant's fingers brush against something unusual on the interior. It has a metal edge. He uses his phones screen to examine it. It's a small latch, some sort of a mechanism..

His hope surges when he realizes this might be his chance. He works his trembling hands to manipulate the latch but it's stiff and uncooperative. He hold his phone in mouth, biting it with his teeth and tries to manipulate the latch with both hands...

...it still doesn't work But he refuses to give in to the frustration...

After what seems like forever, the latch gives way with a click.

He realizes he's unlocked a section of the tube that seems to widen slightly and offers a bit more room to breath; however, he can't afford to be reckless and he knows this...

But suddenly his hope turns to dread! Oh shit!

...Just beyond the unlocked section theres a MASSIVE FAN that's used to propel the water through the ride with high-speed momentum.

*NOTE(\*The MASSIVE FAN is strategically placed to create unexpected bursts of air, adding excitement. It also prevents excessive water buildup. Without it, water could accumulate inside the tube, and affect the rides performance)*

His heart sinks again...

The fan's positioned in a way that he has no choice but to get through it to continue his escape.



He takes a deep breath, he'd be lucky if there's any oxygen left in here. Then he summons his dwindling strength. He's gotta time this perfectly. Slow and steady breaths...

...He inches closer to the fan, damn, here we go again... feeling the water's force growing stronger with every step.

As he reaches the edge of the fan's influence, he hesitates for a moment... Apprehensive but so what, he wants to live...

Just as he climbs through the unexpected happens-- Yep! The fan that was motionless just moments ago, suddenly spins to life...

He's caught off guard. One of the blades grazes his forehead. It ain't a devastating blow but enough to stop him in his tracks.

Another obstacle...shit. He looks up again at the fan... the rotations unpredictable because now it's spinning faster...

He reluctantly begins to backtrack, eventually returns to the section of the tube where he was. He lies on his back. Forehead throbbing...!

...MOMENTS LATER...

Grant shivers. He takes out his dying phone and activates the flashlight feature. The feeble light casts an eerie shadow. Hey, it's better than complete darkness.

As he scans his surroundings, he spots movement. UHOH! The rat has returned and its crawling along the curved walls.

Grant's mind's so fragile, he extends his hand towards the rat, and get this, the rodent approaches his fingers and starts nibbling.

Grant gets odd satisfaction from this bizarre interaction. The pain from the nibbles provides distraction from the misery. Has he completely lost it?

He begins to smile and close his eyes. It's as if he's in bliss. His fingertips split open with blood.

...The rat's finish. It goes back into the darkness.

GRANT

Hey. HEY, come back!

(pleading)

Come back! Don't let me die!

(angry)

Just like everyone else, you filthy, fucking bloodsucker!

He kicks his feet in anger. Driven by loneliness, he follows the rat, feet first and before he can make it a foot down the tube, he hears the sound of pure terror coming from the rat. It literally makes his skin crawl.

He freezes. Loneliness replaced with FEAR, when SUDDENLY--

The rat flees towards him bearing marks from a vicious bite.

Then emerging from the darkness behind the rat is a slithering predator created to hunt and kill. It's cold eyes focus on Grant as it flicks its forked tongue in the air.

GRANT

Shit shit shit. Stay there. Go go  
go. Shew!

But its not going anywhere. In fact it's closing the distance - about two feet from his heels. The snake glides over the slick surface...

..and that damn injured rat has climbed onto his leg, inches away from a mans most vulnerable area.

He knows he has to act but any sudden movement may cause the snake to strike...

...the serpent slithers closer...

Grant ever so cautiously lifts his leg -- praying that the snake won't interpret this as a threat...

In a last ditch effort, he turns off the flashlight on his phone, hoping darkness will deter the predator...

Only thing he sees now is the soft glow of the serpents eyes.

...but the predator is dangerously close. Grant slides backwards - away from the stalking serpent--

HIS HOPE IS TO PUT DISTANCE IN BETWEEN HIM AND THE SNAKE--

But Suddenly, the snake strikes like a rubber-band. Luckily it misses Grant but it's fangs hit the tube with a loud, snapping THUD!

However the snake isn't deterred and continues it's journey towards Grant...

...its slithering dangerously close to his legs and the rat still clings desperately to his thigh, bleeding.

He unclips the waistband of his swim trunks and lowers them slightly as he slides backwards.

And he lets nature take it's course: He pees, aiming it at the snake. AS THE URINE HITS THE SNAKES SCALES IT hisses with anger.

It doesn't retreat but it pauses...

...But the rat, disturbed by the cascade of piss, hurries off Grants leg.

Grant has backed himself into a wall, literally. He can't slide back any further. We can hear his heart beating.

The serpent slithers closer, making its threat much more real. It moves with a confidence that suggests it has total mastery of its environment.

Eventually it gets to him, starting at his ankles. Slow and deliberate. Grant kicks, but all that does is make the snake hiss.

He feels the snakes cold, scaly body coiling around his leg.

It's like the snake is toying with him. It methodically climbs his thigh and pauses...it's head hovering over his abdomen, tongue flicking in and out as if it's savoring the scent of its potential prey...

And thats when theres a familiar vibration coming from his fanny pack. It's his phone, and it's Sarah!

GRANT

Sarah wait! Oh, god, no.

His fingers fumble with the zipper of the fanny pack, but that movement causes it to STRIKE! The fangs SNAPPED SHUT centimeters from his hand...

But fuck it, if he's gonna die, he'll die on his terms. This call could be the lifeline to his escape. He musters some courage. He slowly reaches out towards the snakes slender neck. The reptile flicks its tongue in agitation and SNAPS again, this time it just misses his neck...

And for a moment, time stands still. Real still. Grant and the snake lock eyes. His body stiffens, bracing himself for the worst...

The snakes neck recoils back and STRIKES forward with neck-breaking speed. Grant's heart leaps into his throat as he felt the rush of air--

But as his adrenaline settles, he realizes the snake didn't strike him. It's target was the rat behind him.

It's fangs sink into the rats body making it squeal as it tries to wiggle free, but that only tightens the snakes clench.

Grant puts his hand on his racing heart, he's breathing heavy; hands shaking. Nervous, yet, relieved and afraid. While the snake has it's mouth full, he flings its tail off from off his body.

Meanwhile, serpent basks in the satisfaction of a well-earned victory.

Grant carefully inches away from the snake. Doing his best to avoid drawing attention.

Unbeknownst to Grant (because his back's to the snake), it's eyes begin to gleam - following Grant's progress before it's eyelids begin to droop -- Reptilian slumber...

He grabs his phone and searches for reception. Wishing on a prayer. He dials Sarah's number. No ringing, it just says "Calling"...

GRANT

Is anyone there? Sarah?! Im stuck -  
I'm stuck in this ride. Please help  
me!

He's fixed on phone screen and it still says "calling".

And then that all too familiar low, rumbling sound echoes through the tube - the water-pump is coming alive.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER SECTION OF THE TUBE

Where the water is rushing through the tube with unrestrained force. This time the water fills the entire tube leaving no room to catch a breath above water

GRANT

Knows he only has seconds to decide his next critical move. The slumbering serpent has been awakened by the onslaught of water-

And just like that Grant's submerged.  
His lungs yearn for air.  
He fights to breath.

Unbeknownst to him, the snake has been carried along by the current. Grant and the snake come face to face.

This time the snake lunges and its fangs meet his nose. Sends waves of pain through his body.

His vision blurs. The reptile slowly wraps itself around his neck...Time blurs...Grant goes in and out of consciousness. Involuntarily releasing a stream of bubbles into the water... Seconds stretch to eternity as the Snake squeezes all the air out of his lungs...

Grant summons the last bit of strength... his hands desperately claw at the snake's scales... he tears the snakes grip from his nose and squeezes it by the neck. The creature recoils and Grant seizes the moment by pushing himself away...

...Eventually the waters current carries them apart and the snake fades into the shadows of the tube.

The water-pump has shut off and Grant breaches the surface. Gasping. Battered and bloody, but alive.

He begins to weep unlike any man has ever weeped in a movie before...

A few feet ahead he spots a puddle of water that seems inviting.

His chest aches and his throat is raw from gasping and yelling. And I'm sure the snake wrapping its body around his neck doesn't help.

Grant hovers above the puddle. He slowly puts his nose inside the water and tries to keep it there, desperate to end his torment.. but ultimately he comes up for air...

...He does it again, this time it seems to be longer, letting his nose linger until his vision blurs but human nature won't let him submit.

...And he surfaces once more...

Grant's phone buzzes, shattering the oppressive silence inside the tube. He sees he has a voicemail and a low bar of reception. Of course, he tries to make a call, but that one bar ain't strong enough...

He calls his voicemail, theres a message from Sarah:

SARAH (V.O.)

It wasn't my plan to do this over the phone. In fact I figured we'd all sit down today as a family and have this discussion. But you know what, no.

(MORE)

SARAH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I don't care how you feel, Grant. I don't care if you sign those damn divorce papers or not. I'm moving on with my life. There's no chance in hell we're reconnecting. I'm done with you and your empty promises. You had your chances, and you blew every single one. I can't-- our children can't... we can't keep living in limbo, waiting for a man who's never going to change. Someone will love me, and appreciate the woman that I am. I'm 'not too clingy' for someone. I'm not 'overly emotional' for someone. I don't 'care too much' for someone. And these are things I know, Grant, because... Because I've found that someone. He's every thing I wished you would be - a real hero to these kids and I. You should see how attentive he is with them; how he teaches Alex to throw the football and helps Emily with her schoolwork.

(holding back tears)

You know what I don't get? Me! I don't get myself. In all of this, this is not who I am. And it's no longer who I'll be. YOU'RE NOT EVEN WORTH THE FUCKING TEARS I'M CRYING! You know, I'm not crying because I miss you; but because of all the years I lied to those two innocent souls about who you were... they saw it, and I kept trying to change their perception of you, even when you didn't.

Every sentence eats away at his heart like cancer...  
And then she delivers the final blow:

SARAH

You will now become a distant memory, a mistake I regret every day. You've lost us, Grant, and I hope you can live with that.

\*from now on Grant's voice will be raspy and strained...

GRANT

No, I can't, Sarah. I won't baby.

Grant scrolls through his messages and goes to FAMILY THREAD.

He looks at the Pictures of the Kids, and then Sarah and he.

Time on the phone says 3:41am...

Grant types a message: *please send help. I'm stuck inside the Aqua vortex and i'm dying. Please help.*

He snaps a picture of himself with the tube in the back and hits SEND...

THE MESSAGE JUST LINGERS THERE. NOT ENOUGH RECEPTION!

He tries to send a voice note.

As he speaks into the phone, the sound of his own voice felt foreign, as if he were a stranger to himself:

GRANT

Family. Please send help for me. I've sent messages and tried calling for help. I'm not doing well and my time is running out. And by my estimates I have less than an hour of air, And I don't think I'm going to make it. Please send help, please, help me. I don't deserve to die like this. Sarah, Al, Em... I know I've messed up, more times than I can count. But I want you to know that I love you all.

But as he presses SEND the message just lingers there as a cruel reminder of his isolation in this tube and his fractured life.

Grant ain't got the tears to cry no more. As his emotions reach a breaking point, he finds himself laughing. Each laugh tears at his throat, leaving it more sore and raw.

GRANT

Laughing. Is this what I've come to?

(looks to heaven, shrugs)

Maybe...maybe this is my penance. Maybe I've hurt them too much and this is the only way to make things right. To end the pain I've caused them. I used to think I could fix anything, that I was invincible.

(MORE)

## GRANT (CONT'D)

If I outworked everyone and sacrificed the most, then maybe I- we, could be rich. But I'm nothing more than fuck up. To blind to see the wealth in front me. Every idea, every hope... all washed away. I wish I could hold you Sarah. But you're right; you were always right, I don't deserve you.

Grant looks at his phone where we see a picture of his family is his screensaver. He kisses the screen but the screen also holds another harrowing truth - the battery's dwindling, 9 percent left.

Then he hears that familiar "swoosh" sound of a sent message. His text to Sarah just went through!

He taps on her contact. The phone rings! Once, and then--

## SARAH'S VOICEMAIL

I'm sorry the person you called is not accepting calls right now. Bye.

## GRANT

Dammit! Why won't you pick up Sarah?!

His knuckles turn white as he grips the phone.

He lies face down into a puddle and pushes the back of his head down, trying to drown himself. He doesn't succeed. He lies there in the puddle with his eyes closed--

## EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

100 Ft Below Grant and his watery tomb, a wet highway stretches out below.

A colossal TRUCK, thunders down the highway. The tires churning through the puddles. Behind it a CAMRY, tailgates recklessly.

The heavy rain obscures the road ahead..

## INSIDE THE CAMRY

LILIAN (50's) grips the wheel trying to maintain control--



## HIGHWAY

That TRUCK sways dangerously across the road as the DRIVER struggles to maintain control--

Suddenly, HYDROPLANING happens....

...The TRUCK skids violently and the CAMRY, unable to react in time, SLAMS into the trucks bumper.

The CRASH is tumultuous!

Glass shatters, Metal crumples.

The CAMRY is sent into a Tasmanian like spin.

## AQUA VORTEX

Grant watches in horror as the CAR spins out of control, tires screeching. Time seems to slow as the CAMRY'S' fate hangs in the balance.

## HIGHWAY

The TRUCK sways wildly, as the DRIVER fights to regain stability. He's a silhouette of panic behind the wheel, trying to steer clear of further disaster.

With a final, desperate swerve, the CAR narrowly avoids a collision with an oncoming vehicle. It comes to a HALT, smoke billowing from its battered frame.

The TRUCK manages to steady itself...

The DRIVER rushes out the TRUCK, one hand already clutching his phone, and races towards the mangled CAMRY.

## AQUA VORTEX

Grant, watches the accident unfold. His eyes are fixed on the clear section of the tube where the chaos on the highway's visible.

## HIGHWAY - ACCIDENT SCENE

Police cars and ambulances arrive at the scene. Officers swiftly exit their vehicles to assess the situation.

Approaching the TRUCK DRIVER is OFFICER ANDERSON (early 50's, stoic).

He carries himself with a quiet warmth that instantly puts people at ease. His strong build is honed from years on the force, but his gentle blue eyes and salt- and-pepper beard give him an air of rugged charm.

OFFICER ANDERSON

Sir, are you okay? What happened?

DRIVER

I think. I don't see any bruises.  
It's the lady who needs help.

They both look over at the crushed Camry, neither of their faces think anyones survived. They rush over:

DRIVER

The truck just started swaying and  
I couldn't control it.

AQUA VORTEX

Grant strains his eyes, trying to make out the Officers movement. His heart races as he contemplates what he could do to get their attention.

ACCIDENT SCENE

Firefighters extract the driver of the CAMRY from the wreck.

AQUA VORTEX

The chaotic scene of the accident continues below, Grant fumbles to activate the phones LED flashlight.

He toggles it on and off, sending beams of light through the darkness--

He shouts at the top of his raspy, air deprived lungs:

GRANT

Hey! Help. HELP ME! I'M UP HERE!

Although the light flickers and it would be possible to see if they were looking for it, the Officers and EMT's are still engrossed in the accident. Besides, their strobe lights don't help make Grant's LED's more visible.

GRANT

I'm trapped! Please. Someone,  
Anyone!

But his cries are drowned out by the chaos below.

He sets the phone to strobe mode. The LED lights pulse like a frantic heartbeat.

GRANT  
(teary-eyed)  
I HAVE KIDS!!1  
(BANGS)  
HELP ME! I HAVE KIDS...A FAMILY!!

#### ACCIDENT SCENE

The tow trucks haul away mangled vehicles, and paramedics tend to the injured. The blaring sirens of emergency vehicles gradually fade...

Officer Anderson stands beside his patrol car, soaked and weary, as the scene slowly clears.

He hets in his PATROL CAR and reaches for the switch to turn off the flashing lights.

He exhales. Relieved. Long night.

He pulls up the WAWA app on his phone. He has a free coffee voucher.

Just as he starts the car, something catches his eye. Up the hill, he catches a glimpse of an odd flickering light. It's dim and distant but colorful and noticeable.

He squints. Confused. Is that something or is he just tired as hell?

He watches the light flicker and then stop abruptly...

OFFICER ANDERSON  
Shit, I gotta get a coffee or I'm  
gonna be needing a tow truck home.

He stares again.

#### AQUA VORTEX - SAME

Grant, shaking the phone. Making the strobe lights as noticeable as possible. He sees there's one car left and he probably his last hope.

Banging on the Tube!

#### ACCIDENT SCENE

Officer Anderson eases off the gas pedal and guides his patrol car toward the waterslide, the nagging hunch at the back of his mind growing stronger

As he gets within fifty yards of the towering tube, his eyes remain fixed on it. Something about this situation refuses to allow him to dismiss it so easily.

He slows his car to a crawl. Stares again. Suddenly--

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

(ball busting)

Anderson, you see that game? My boys wiped the field with your asses. I want my fifty.

OFFICER ANDERSON

Take it out my check.

DISPATCHER

You sure you'll survive?!

(they laugh)

How's it out there tonight?

OFFICER ANDERSON

A truck decided to tango with a sedan, but Lady Luck was riding shotgun tonight. {She} walked away without a scratch.

DISPATCHER

Well, thats one way to dodge the traffic I guess..

Anderson's smirk turns into a grin.

OFFICER ANDERSON

Theres a Wawa nearby.

DISPATCHER

Anderson you've got the best beat in town.

OFFICER ANDERSON

That's Jersey for ya.

DISPATCHER

Aye. Got something' for ya. Got a call earlier - something about being stuck on a waterslide in Jackson. Probably just a prank or something but give it a look, would ya? After you finish your coffee of course--

Before the dispatcher can finish the sentence, Andersons demeanor changes.

OFFICER ANDERSON

(urgent)

Hold on, dispatch. Jackson, you said.

DISPATCHER

(confused)

Yeah, thats what the call said. Probably a late-night dare or--

ANDERSON makes a swift U-turn, lights flashing, sirens wailing. The cruiser races back in the opposite direction, towards the slide.

AQUA VORTEX

Grant summons his last bit of strength to rip his t-shirt. He ties it tightly around his face, the cloth digging into his skin as he makes it as secure as possible.

That familiar water-pump starts rumbling again. Followed by a strong GUSH of water--

He submerges his face, fighting against his instinct to panic... he pushes himself down deeper and deeper into the embrace of the water.

The need for air is nudging at him, but he can't relent...

His free hand claws at the water with desperation, trying to gain a few inches of depth...

With his final, desperate push he propels himself deeper.

The current overtakes him and carries him towards the loop. His face collides with the wall. He hopes this is the end...

But God had other plans...

The water recedes just before he takes his last breath and leaves him alive. Though in his heart he wished for the opposite. He cant get shit right...

INTERCUT - AQUA VORTEX/ OUTSIDEY

Officer Anderson sprints toward the Aqua Vortex, the sound of his own racing heart echoing in his ears.

He clutches a sturdy crowbar, as his boots splashed through puddles as he charged towards the entrance that the riders normally took. Up the stairs he goes--

The climb is relentless, and the ascent seemed to stretch on forever. But finally he emerged at the top. Heaving. Dripped and dripping water. His uniform clinging to him like skin.

He sticks hi head in the Vortex:

OFFICER ANDERSON

Hey! Can you hear me?

Grant's ears perked up at the unexpected sound -- a human voice and it's close.

GRANT

Who's there?! Help me! I can't breath.

OFFICER ANDERSON

I'm here to help you.

GRANT

You have to get me out of here; I cant take much longer.

OFFICER ANDERSON

Are you injured?

GRANT

Bruised.

OFFICER ANDERSON

I can't see you but do I sound very far?

GRANT

I'm tired and cold.

OFFICER ANDERSON

We'll get you warmed up soon. But first, we need to figure out how to get you out of that tube. Is there any way you can move closer to where you entered?

Grant can't believe the dumb question.

GRANT

I don't have time for wasted words.

Anderson realizes his question was foolish. After a quick assessment it's clear that Grant can't make his way to the entrance.

He ignores the rain-soaked fiberglass and swings his leg over the edge of the tube and positions himself to climb on the outside. The sheer height and the elements don't deter him.

Each handhold and foothold had to be calculated precisely. One wrong move could send him tumbling down...

OFFICER ANDERSON  
(to himself)  
Shit, what am I doing?

GRANT  
Please hurry!

Anderson clings to a looping section of the Vortex. The loop descended at a steep angle, making the climb even more challenging. Anderson's gloved hands gripped the moist fiberglass as he inched his way upward, fighting the wind and the pull of gravity.

Grant can hear the noise of someone overhead.

Anderson, feeling the adrenaline in his veins, grits his teeth and continues. He can see Grant up ahead.

Anderson reaches Grant's level and the two men lock eyes through the clear section of the tube. Grant, withered, on his last few breaths. Anderson trying to catch his breath as it was visible in the chilly air.

OFFICER ANDERSON  
Can you hear me?  
(reassuring, with a trusty  
grin)  
Im getting you out of here.

Grant nods weakly.

Anderson motions for Grant to move away as he takes the crowbar to the fiberglass repeatedly. His legs straddle the top, and he bangs and bangs.

Grant watches - eyes wide with hope and desperation. Fiberglass barely cracks...

Anderson repeats his efforts, now using the curvy side of the crow bar.

Finally there's a crack in the fiberglass...

Anderson wants to give up, but he looks at Grant and knows he needs more hope and positivity than he can give.

OFFICER ANDERSON  
Listen. Can you hear me?!

Grant nods.

OFFICER ANDERSON  
You have a family? Someone you love?  
(he nods)  
Think of them and getting home to them. That's the only thing that'll keep you alive - getting home to them. And breath slow. Let me just get you some fresh air...

Anderson knows he has a lot of work to do but he wants Grant to focus on the positive.

Anderson begins to again strike the stubborn material, this time with more power and recklessness - letting the blows land where they land, trying to expand on the crack...

Each blow sends Vibrations through the tube... but that crack won't break...

Anderson raises his hand, signaling for Grant to stand back.

OFFICER ANDERSON  
Listen, this is going to be loud!  
So I need you to stand clear! Can you move away. Far.

Grant's too weary. He really can't and the look in his eyes conveys that!

OFFICER ANDERSON  
Come on, Man Give it what you got.  
I know you got it deep down in ya.

He doesn't.

OFFICER ANDERSON  
Got a wife? Some kids?

His eyes say he does.

Anderson unholsters his firearm.



OFFICER ANDERSON

I can tell you love them? Is this  
how you'd want them to remember  
you? If I don't shoot through here  
{it's the end for you}--

Grant hasn't moved so Anderson can't get a clear shot. But he has to act now.

OFFICER ANDERSON

We don't have time! Move!

Grant crawls a few feet from the targeted area.

OFFICER ANDERSON

That's it, just a bit more!

Anderson lines up his shot, and takes a deep breath to steady his aim. Every bullet counts. He can't afford a mistake.

BANG! The shot reverberates through the tube and the fiberglass shatters around the impact point.

Anderson immediately shifts his position.

He fires again to create a larger opening. The shots echoes through the tube, and a spiderweb of cracks forms around the point of impact.

Anderson takes another well-aimed shot. Grant's body succumbs to another seizure. His muscles convulse uncontrollably, and his breathing becomes more strained. Foam starts to form at the corners of his mouth.

OFFICER ANDERSON

Hold on! Just a bit longer!

Anderson's heart races as he continues to fire, enlarging the hole.

The seizure intensifies; his movements become violent. His body jerks and twists, making it challenging for Anderson to gauge his safety while wielding a gun.

OFFICER ANDERSON

Stay down! I've almost got you!!!!

Anderson fires again, and this time, the fiberglass breaks away, creating a hole large enough for fresh air to flow in.

Anderson holsters his gun.

The seizure continues, and his body is still out of reach.

OFFICER ANDERSON

Come on, friend. Just grab my hand.  
It's the only lifeline you got!

Anderson reaches into the tube to grab him but a shard of fiberglass is blocking him.

He takes his crowbar and STRIKES at the fiberglass. The crowbar hits the shard with a loud, echoing clang, but the glass proves more resilient than expected. It chips slightly but doesn't break free.

Fuck it. He knows what he has to do.

Anderson reaches into the tube--

OFFICER ANDERSON

AHHHHHHHH!

The rigid edge of the fiberglass cuts into his skin, but he presses on with blood trickling down his arm as he continues to extend it.

Now, with a firm grip, Anderson pulls Grant upward, allowing him to breathe in fresh air.

The two men share a intense moment of relief as they catch their breath... but they're still up here...

Just as Anderson and Grant share that fleeting moment of relief, the sound of the water pump reverberates through the tube again. The sudden rush of water sends a powerful surge beneath them, causing Grant to slip from Anderson's grasp.

OFFICER ANDERSON

No! Hold on!

Desperation washes over him as he reaches out, fingers grazing the tips of Grant's wet shorts, but it's too late. Grant is carried by the current, disappearing into the tube.

Anderson peers into the small hole he created. He knows grant's somewhere in there but the darkness makes it impossible to pinpoint where.

AQUA VORTEX

Grant's pinned up against the wall where the loop begins...

OFFICER ANDERSON (O.S.)

Can you hear me?! Where are you?

OUTSIDE

He continues to work on the hole he created. Gnawing away at it with the crowbar.

Anderson tries to radio for backup but the signal's too weak to transmit the call.

OFFICER ANDERSON

This is Officer Anderson, I'm on the Aqua Vortex waterslide at the Action Zone. We have a person trapped inside. I need immediate backup, I repeat, IMMEDIATE BACKUP and specialized rescue equipment. Over!

The radio crackles with static...  
Anderson strains to hear a response...

We hear the distant thumping of helicopter blades slicing through the air...

Anderson clings to the tube, his fingers white-knuckled as the wind threatened to snatch him away.

As the helicopter hovers above the ride, its rotor sends rainwater in all directions.

Suspended beneath the chopper, the rescue team prepares for their descent--

PILOT

Harness, secure! Tools, ready!

RESCUE WORKER

(nods)

Let's bring him home.

The pilot gives a 'thumbs up' and lowers the rescue workers towards the tube.

RESCUE WORKER 2

Keep an eye on the E-lines.

With expertise the Pilot continues his decent.

ON THE AQUA VORTEX - SHORT WHILE LATER

A chainsaw breaks through the fiberglass.  
The Rescue workers toss the glass debris below.  
It lands with a huge THUD.

The Pilot shines his light into the pitch-black tunnel as a section of the top is dismembered.

RECSUE WORKER  
We're through!

ON THE GROUND

Anderson stands at a distance. A towel over his head to keep him from an pneumonia.

ON THE AQUA VORTEX

The hole in the tube now large enough for a rescue, the helicopter team prepared to airlift Grant to safety.

They secure Grant onto a stretcher.

RECSUE WORKER  
We're ready to lift!

PILOT  
Okay, on my count. One... Two...  
Three!

The helicopter gently hoists Grant out of the tube...  
...and he dangles in the air, frail and shivering, his lower half stained and soiled with urine and feces...

INT. HELICOPTER - MOMENTS LATER

Grant lay on a stretcher, his breathing shallow and weak. The PARAMEDIC works diligently to stabilize him.

PARAMEDIC  
You're going to be okay, sir. Just  
hang in there We've got you now.

ON THE GROUND

The scene is swarmed with REPORTERS.  
One manages to get Anderson's attention.  
She eagerly shoves the Microphone in his face.

REPORTER  
Officer Anderson, you were the  
first responder at this scene, and  
you risked your life to save this  
unknown man.

(MORE)

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Can you tell us if you learned anything about why this man was inside that tube?

OFFICER ANDERSON

I wish I could give you more information, but unfortunately, I know nothing about the victim. When I arrived, he was already trapped, and my primary focus was to insure his safety.

REPORTER

Victim? Are you treating this as an attempted murder.

OFFICER ANDERSON

At this moment, no. But we--

REPORTER

It must have been a challenging situation. Most people wouldn't dare to go in that tube, nonetheless on top. Can you walk us through your thought process?

OFFICER ANDERSON

As I mentioned earlier, my duty is to protect and serve, so I knew I had to do everything I could to help. I didn't have any information about the man's predicament, but that didn't matter.

REPORTER

You've shown immense bravery today. What message do you have for our viewers in light of this heroic act?

OFFICER ANDERSON

Check on your people.

REPORTER

Thank you.

Anderson walks away being swarmed by reporters.

REPORTER

Ladies and gentleman, there you have it. Officer John T Anderson, the towns new hero...

And her praise trails off...

EXT. PRECINCT PARKING LOT - DAY

**SUPER: 2 WEEKS LATER**

Its full. So full that people are standing in the street.

MAYOR MCDONALD is at the podium., Behind the mic...

MAYOR

Ladies and gentlemen, today we're here to celebrate Officer Anderson, a man who doesn't just walk the beat, he practically flies it!

The crowd chuckles. Anderson smiles awkwardly.

MAYOR

Yes, our dedicated officer spent his last week before retirement quite literally above us all. Not just in rank, mind you, but up in the sky, supervising from a whole new level.

Grant still looks frail and depressed. He enters the lot and posts up at the gate near the front.

MAYOR

You see, Anderson here doesn't believe in half-measures. When he ascends, he does it with style. Reminding us that the sky's the limit when it comes to keeping our community safe.

The crowd bursts into laughter.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

But in all seriousness, folks, Officer Anderson's commitment to our community is nothing short of extraordinary. He doesn't just serve and protect; but he takes his policing to new heights! So lets give a thunderous round of applause to our very own sky-high superhero, Officer John T. Anderson! May his retirement be as epic as his decorated career.

The audience applauds enthusiastically.

Anderson walks up to the stage.

MAYOR  
 (to anderson)  
 You took this thing to new heights.

Anderson laughs and they shake hands.  
 Anderson takes to the mic.

OFFICER ANDERSON  
 Thank you, Mayor. I don't know if  
 this was the Jackson Police  
 department or a Comedy central  
 roast.

The crowd laughs. The Mayor whispers something in Anderson's  
 ear. There's a tense silence.

Mayor takes the mic...

MAYOR  
 (clears his throat)  
 Before we continue, we have someone  
 here who we weren't sure if they'd  
 make it, but he's here. And I'm  
 sure he'd like to give a few words.  
 Grant Dobbins everyone. Give it up  
 for him.

Grant slowly takes to the stage with the help of a few  
 Councilmen.

Anderson stands to the side. As he helps grant on the stage:

OFFICER ANDERSON  
 You don't have to say anything,  
 it's fine if you're not up to it.

Grant gives him a look like "how could I not".

Grant gets behind the podium. This speech will be heartfelt  
 but filled with pauses. The man who has been through hell is  
 still in it but wants to honor his angel.

GRANT  
 Hi. You saved me...

The crowd listens intently.

GRANT (CONT'D)  
 I didn't want to be saved, but you  
 did it anyway.  
 What makes a hero? Is it someone  
 who rushes in to save a life, no  
 matter what?  
 (MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

Or is it someone who's been broken,  
drowning in their own despair, and  
can't see a way out?

Anderson stands there, chest poked out, humble yet proud.

GRANT (CONT'D)

(emotional)

Officer Anderson, you saved me from  
myself. I don't know if I'll ever  
find the answers I'm looking for,  
but I do know this... you gave me a  
second chance.

Eyes in the crowd are getting moist...

GRANT (CONT'D)

Officer Anderson is a hero, not  
just because of what he did on that  
day, but because he gave me  
something I didn't believe I  
deserved: hope.

Grant scans the crowd. His eyes lock onto his family - Sarah,  
Emily, and Alex. They're there, quietly supportive, tears in  
their eyes.

The applause is thunderous as Grant steps away from the  
microphone and off the stage, the weight of his words  
settling on the hearts of everyone present.

Grant and Anderson share an awkward hug.  
Grant leans into it while Anderson tries to keep some  
distance.

OFFICER ANDERSON

You didn't have to, but thank you.  
It's good to see you here.

GRANT

Likewise.

Grant walks off and makes his way through the crowd towards  
his family...

OFFICER ANDERSON

Ladies and gentlemen, I know this  
is a celebration for me... and I  
thank this wonderful town for it,  
but in my life there are more  
hero's, bigger hero's.

(MORE)



OFFICER ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Before I continue, I'd like to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to some very special people, who've been by my side on this heroic journey. My wife...to be, Sarah, you've shown me what true happiness feels like.

Grant freezes. Maybe he's hearing things or maybe it's another 'Sarah'. The noise in the room fades into the background and he wonders if he's hearing things; however, it's a common name.

He continues through the crowd...

OFFICER ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Your warmth, your kindness, your love - they've filled my life with meaning I never thought possible. Your strength and resilience inspire me every day. You're an incredible mother, and your love has brought light to my world. Alex, EmEAzy, as I call her...

Emily makes a hand signal at Anderson, he does it back. It's a shared bond between them.

OFFICER ANDERSON

You two are my hero's. The way you love your mom, keeps me.. It's just unlike anything I've ever witnessed. And I want you to know, I will never stop fighting for you.

Grant stands there, a myriad of emotions churning inside him.

He watches as Sarah, Alex, and Emily smile at Anderson, their eyes filled with affection and admiration. His heart aches as he witnesses the joy that Anderson has brought to his family...

As he approaches, Sarah turns, her eyes meeting his. There's a mixture of surprise, concern, and something else he can't quite place. Alex and Emily glance between their parents, sensing the tension.

SARAH

(soft)  
Grant...

GRANT

Sarah.

Grant feels a lump forming in his throat. He knows he has to say something.

GRANT  
I...I'm glad you found happiness,  
Sarah. Truly. I mean it.

She reaches out, placing a hand on his arm, a silent acknowledgment of their shared history.

SARAH  
Thank you for being here.

GRANT  
(to his kids)  
Hey--

Before he can finish his sentence, Emily closes her eyes, as if trying to etch this moment into her memory... and hugs him with a tenderness that speaks volumes.

Grant holds back his emotions.

SARAH  
I hate that you found out this way.

GRANT  
You weren't lying when you said he  
was a hero.

That puts a light smile on Sarah's face.

EMILY  
I love you.

Alex follows with a tight hug. He cries.

ALEX  
I'm so sorry...I'm--

His voice catches in his throat, and his emotions overwhelm him.

ALEX  
I forgive you dad.

Sarah looks at him.

SARAH  
We all do. And I was wrong. I'm  
sorry.

A SHORT WHILE LATER

Grant stands with his children at a distance, watching as Sarah and Anderson celebrate in the parking lot.

Cameras flash, capturing the smiles and laughter of a new family forming. For Grant, it's a bitter pill to swallow, knowing he's no longer a part of that picture but he's grateful he didn't give up...

Alex, with a hint of mischief in his eyes, can't help but break the tension--

ALEX

Hey, Dad, I got a question.

GRANT

Anything.

ALEX

Remember that time in the Aqua  
Vortex when you got stuck and  
turned into a superhero?

Grant chuckles, a genuine smile finally breaks through the sadness.

GRANT

Oh, you mean the day I became Aqua-  
Man? Yep, I remember.

They all share a laugh.

The camera pans out, capturing this heartwarming moment as the sun sets on a new chapter in their lives.

FADE OUT.