A WOUNDED WARRIOR'S CHRISTMAS

by

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FADE IN:

INT. INSIDE CAR - DAY

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

JACKSON
Only 74 miles and we see grandma.

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

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

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

JAYLEN
Yuck, I don't want to see kissing.

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

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

JACKSON
Remember your grandparents are older and I want you to be on your best behavior.
NOELLE
Or else.

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

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

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

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

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

NOELLE
Make sure Ace gets to run around too.

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

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

NOELLE
This is our last Thanksgiving with them for a couple of years since the Army is moving us to Japan this summer.
JAYLEN
Oh yeah buddy! My friend Tyler moved to Japan last year. Can't wait to do BMX biking with him. (Pause) He's a one smart dude.

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

Jaylen get angry and balls up his fists.

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

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

NOELLE
(Angry)
Jaylen!

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

JAYLEN
...uh Sorry Dad.

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

JAYLEN
Sorry Madison.

NOELLE
Hand me your ipad right now. You will not talk to your sister like that. (Pause) Madison you stop aggravating your brother.
Jaylen reluctantly hands the ipad to Noelle, then turns to look out the window pouting and scoots as far away from his sister as possible.

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

JACKSON
Settled down now, we're almost there.

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

MADISON
I think Ace has to pee mom.

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

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

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

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

Jackson pulls into a gas station.
EXT. BEACH NEAR THE PIER - DAY

It's noon the day before Thanksgiving in Panama City Beach, Florida. We see a tall African American male 40ish 6'2, scraggly beard, unkempt afro wearing Air Force sweat shirt and ball cap. He walks gingerly out of the patio door, down the stairs and sits on a beach chair half way to the water. He stares solemnly at the waves crashing on the shore. Soon an couple in their early 60's walk by with their golden retriever who is off the leash. The dog sees the guy sitting in the beach chair and runs full speed toward the man. He stands up quickly and looks terrified.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. AFGHANISTAN BATTLEFIELD (2013) - DAY

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

TIMOTHY
Watch out for the dog!

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

BACK TO PRESENT:

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

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

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

They shake his hand smiling but Timothy barely holds their hand. He does not smile, but instead looks past them.
WILLIAM
Air Force huh? Me too. What was your ASFC?

TIMOTHY
Combat Controller

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

Timothy grunts but doesn't encourage further conversation.

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

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

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

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

Timothy manages a slight smile and nods.

WILLIAM
Aim High!

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

INT. INSIDE CAR - DAY

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

JAYLEN
This is sick! Sick I tell you.
NOELLE
What? You're sick!

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

NOELLE
The things you kids say. But you're right, it's beautiful down here.

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

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

Jaylen looks at Madison and rolls his eyes.

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

JACKSON
Sure you can.

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

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

JACKSON
I know mom and dad....and well we need to let them run and burn off all that pent up energy.
NOELLE
Maybe you're right. They are wound tighter than a clock.

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She puts a top on the boiling soup, turns it down, takes off her apron and walks towards him.
GRANDMA
Perfect. The stew can simmer and
I'll walk out there with you to
meet them

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

GRANDMA
Join us for Thanksgiving dinner
tomorrow? Say 4pm?

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

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

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

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

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

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

JACKSON
Mom don't listen to her, she's
always up to her match maker
schemes.
The kids get out of the car and run up and hug the grandparents. Everyone's making small talk and Ace is barking and running around.

GRANDMA
Who wants to hit the beach?

The kids look expectantly at their parents.

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

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

Grandma hugs Jackson again and looks into his eyes.

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

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

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

NOELLE
Keep an eye on Ace.

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They are seated on the couch and love seat talking. Noelle gets a coke from the kitchen and brings one to Jackson. After a few minute Jackson gets up and heads to the door.
JACKSON
Hey dad, help me unload the car.

Grandpa goes outside with Jackson.

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

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

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

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

NOELLE
Nice!

INT. ON THE BEACH - CONTINUOUS

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

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

TIMOTHY
(Gruffly)
He should be on a leash. Dogs are not allowed in this area. (Pause) The dog beach is way down there.
Timothy points towards the pier.

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

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

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

TIMOTHY
I'm Sergeant Smith.

MADISON
You're first name's Sergeant?

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

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

EXT. BEACH HOUSE PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

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

GRANDPA
How's things going son? When do you retire?
JACKSON
Retire in two years. We head to Okinawa Japan in July. After that, we're done.

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOELLE
Honey, where's the kids?

Jackson stands up and walks to the end of the patio looking down the beach.
JACKSON
I see 'em by the pier, I'll call them.

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

JACKSON
Jaylen, Madison come on back.

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

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

Jackson looks surprised and then looks at grandpa.

JACKSON
No I sure didn't.

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

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

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

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

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

Grandma comes to the door with two big towels laughing.
GRANDMA
You guys look like drowned rats.

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

NOELLE
Shower! Now! Both of you.

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

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

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

Grandma gives Jaylen a high five.

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

Grandma smiles at Madison and touches her on the shoulder.

GRANDPA
I'll see what I can do princess.

NOELLE
Wow that nor'easter storm looks like it could really turn into something dangerous.
JACKSON
Like super storm Sandy that hit the New Jersey a couple years ago. (Pause) Man I sure hope they don't call me back from leave early.

GRANDMA
They can't do that can they?

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

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

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

JAYLEN
Grammy, I'm hungry when's dinner?

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

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

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

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

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

MADISON
What's that dad? Decompress.

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

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

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

Jackson looks at Noelle helplessly.

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

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

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

Grandma breaks her seconds long trance happily greeting them.

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

She escorts them into the dining room.

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

Everyone shakes hands and becomes acquainted.

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

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

**NOELLE**
The table is all set, let's eat.

**GRANDPA**
Everyone please join hands as we Thank God for this beautiful meal, family and friends.
INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

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

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

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

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

JACKSON
Yes this is Master Sergeant Hunter. Whose this?

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

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

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

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

NOELLE
What's up honey?

Jackson mouths "I gotta go back to DC"
JACKSON
Roger, goodnight sir. (Pause) Can you have Sergeant Hernandez pick me up at.... ok goodnight.

Jackson throws his cell phone on the couch in disgusts.

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

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

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

Noelle walks over and hugs Jackson and rubs his forehead.

NOELLE
We love you honey, we understand.

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

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

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

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

She continues to listen and shakes her head. Jackson walks over and puts his hands her shoulders.
NOELLE
(Angry)
Yeah my husband got the same MAC flight information. Yes! I said Yes! Ok bye.

JACKSON
You too honey?

Noelle nods and continues to scribble on the paper aimlessly.

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

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

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

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

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

JACKSON
Goodnight dad...mom.

NOELLE
We will tell the kids in the morning.
GRANDPA
Jaylen will be glad to miss school. Madison, I'm not so sure.

GRANDMA
What time do you fly out in the morning?

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

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

INT. MILITARY FLIGHT TERMINAL - MORNING

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

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

NOELLE
That's us.

Noelle and Jackson stand up check their paperwork and hug everyone. Jaylen is upset and fighting back tears. Madison is smiling hugging daddy.
JACKSON
Kids you mind them alright? They have our permission to punish you...old school style.

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

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

GRANDMA
You will not! Those are my babies.

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

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

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

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

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

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Grandparents and kids are trimming the tree. Christmas music can be heard and a plate of gingerbread cookies and a red velvet cake are on the counter. On the floor is a mess of wrapping paper, tape, scissors and wrapped presents.
JAYLEN
Grandpa when is mom and dad coming back? They said it would be a week...and it's been two weeks.

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

Madison inhales loudly and rolls her eyes impatiently.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grandma flips on the TV and the weather channel is on. It shows the devastation of the blizzard conditions in DC. The reporter throws to a press conference in which Noelle is answering questions on the storm aftermath.
JAYLEN
There's mom! There's mom! She's famous, she's on TV

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

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

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

REPORTER 1
Lieutenant Commander Hunter, is it true the storm is still spinning out in the Atlantic and may make a second landfall? Creating the unthinkable, a second blizzard?

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

REPORTER 2
Commander Hunter, isn't your husband also on the emergency response team?

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

REPORTER 2
He's fine. I saw him early this morning on a large crane clearing wrecked cars. (Pause) He told me if I saw you at the news conference to tell "wifey" he sends love from the snowbanks.

Several in the room laugh.

NOELLE
Yes, that sounds like him alright.
REPORTER 2
How are your children holding out, in this storm? Must be difficult for them with mom and dad working the blizzard recovery.

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

REPORTER 1
Tough life.

REPORTER 2
Fighting the sun and surf, must be difficult for them.

Room chuckles.

Noelle faces the camera smiling.

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

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

EXT. FISHING PIER - DAY

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

JAYLEN
Cool, what kinda fish is that?
TIMOTHY
Spanish Mackerel

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

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

TIMOTHY
'Aight Kid.

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

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

JAYLEN
Ok Sarge.

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

GRANDPA
I'm Bill.

TIMOTHY
Sergeant Smith....uh Timothy

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

GRANDPA
My grandson loves to fish. His dad, had to go back to DC for the snow storm, so he's hanging out with us.
JAYLEN
Can I cast the line back out? I won't mess it up...promise.

TIMOTHY

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

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

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

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

JAYLEN
I got one!

INT. BEACH HOUSE - EVENING

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

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

Madison jumps up excitedly and grabs her toys.

MADISON
Thanks grammy! Those bubbles smell sooooo good! (Pause) Is it ok if I turn the lights off and use my special lantern we got today?
GRANDMA
Of course honey. Jaylen, you take a shower downstairs.

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

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

MADISON
Yeah, you smell horrible, like fish heads. Pew weeeeee!

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

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

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

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

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

GRANDPA
Alright, but no stalling. Shower and then bed...ok?
INT. BEACH HOUSE-LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

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

MADISON
(Screaming)
No! Aruuuggg!! OH my God!!

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

GRANDPA
Madison, what's wrong.

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

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

GRANDMA
Jaylen! Get in here.

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

JAYLEN
Eleven, twelve,...uh..I'm tired...thirteen...uh...ahhhh
JACKSON (V.O)
Keep doing push ups, all 20 of
them. I can't believe you are
doing this to your grandparents.
(Pause) Just wait 'til I see you.

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

NOELLE (V.O.)
You are grounded tomorrow, meaning
you stay inside all day.

Jaylen collapses on the floor breathing heavily.

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

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

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

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

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

NOELLE (V.O.)
He can do any chores you have.
Also no electronic devices ....at
all.
JACKSON
He will write a 2 page essay on ways he can deal with his anger.

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

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

JAYLEN
Yeah dad.

GRANDMA
Go shower and get in bed.

Jaylen stands up sweating and walks away without saying goodnight.

INT. SERGEANT SMITH'S CONDO - DAY

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

PHONE CONVERSATION STARTS

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Stop calling, I told you I don't have anything to say to you.

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

FEMALE VOICE (VO)
No. I'm not coming down there.
TIMOTHY
So, just like that? What about my boys, they need me.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
I'm not going to argue. You can call later and talk to the boys, but I'm done talking.

TIMOTHY
Are you serious?

PHONE CONVERSATION ENDS

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

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

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

TIMOTHY
Who is it? What do you want?

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

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

TIMOTHY
No kid. I'm taking a nap.

JAYLEN
I heard you yelling. Are you ok? Want me to get grandpa?
TIMOTHY
No....I'm fine. I....I uh kicked my toe on the couch.

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

TIMOTHY
Nope.

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

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

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

JAYLEN
Ok, see ya tomorrow.

TIMOTHY
Yeah.

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

INT. BEACH BY THE PIER - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

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

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

FLASHBACK ENDS

JAYLEN
Sergeant Smith, what you making?

Timothy is suddenly aware of Jaylen and Madison.

TIMOTHY
A nativity scene for the contest tomorrow.

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

TIMOTHY
I'ma try.

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

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

Nope.

Madison walks off with Ace.

JAYLEN

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

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

TIMOTHY

Go get me some water.

Jaylen stands up grinning excitedly salutes him.

JAYLEN

Yes Sir!

TIMOTHY

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

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE - EVENING

Everyone is seated at the table eating dinner.

JAYLEN

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

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

GRANDPA

It looks fantastic! But I hope you're not wearing out your welcome.
JAYLEN
No grandma, he needs me. He can't run get a buckets of water fast like I can. (Pause) His back got hurt in the...in the...war

MADISON
Where is his wife and kids?

JAYLEN
Nashville.

MADISON
Did they get a divorce?

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

JAYLEN
Nosey marosy, none of your business.

Grandma picks up Jaylen's hand and smiles warmly and pats it softly.

GRANDMA
It's great you're helping him.

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

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

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

The quickly leave the table and run full speed into the computer room
INT. KIDS BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

MADISON
It was so cool to Skype with mom and dad.

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

MADISON
How many days before Christmas?

GRANDPA
Six days my little pumpkin til Santa comes down the chimney

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

MADISON
Grandpa..........there's no Santa

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

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

MADISON
Ok grandpa.

JAYLEN
Me and Sergeant Smith are volunteering at the Toys for Tots tomorrow at Pier Park. (Pause) That is if you will take me. He's riding his motorcycle
GRANDPA  
Sounds good. Now go to bed, you've had a busy day.

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE-KITCHEN – MORNING

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

GRANDPA  
Thanks for helping me with breakfast.

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

GRANDPA  
Good girl!

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

GRANDPA  
Yeah?

MADISON  
Mrs. Jenkins calls it kitchen chemistry.

GRANDPA  
Mmmmmmm

Grandpa puts the blueberry muffins in the wicker basket. He takes a bit of one with a big smile.
GRANDPA
Blueberries....yum!  Great idea to use fresh berries instead of canned.

Grandma comes downstairs.

GRANDMA
Where's Jaylen?  Breakfast is ready.

GRANDPA
He took out the trash, should be right back.

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

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

JAYLEN
(exhales loudly)
Grandma.

Smoke is eddying up from the toaster oven.

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

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

GRANDMA
Honey be careful!  Kids get back!

Everyone stands with mouths gaping open.  The white extinguisher powder has gotten on all of the food, counter and wall.
MADISON
Wow grandpa. I've never seen....a
fire in the house....oohhh

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. PIER PARK- PANAMA CITY BEACH - DAY

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

JAYLEN
Only two families left to pick up
presents.

TIMOTHY
Yep, we're almost done.
This is fun, helping kids who don't have much.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of course you can you're my princess.

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

Grandma stars at him with a stern look and her hands on her hips.
GRANDMA
Nonsense Soldier you will report
to our house this evening at 6pm.
Is that understood?

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

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

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

GRANDMA
Good see you at 6pm sharp!

JAYLEN
Good! He can sit with me and
grandpa.

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE - EVENING

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

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

Madison snickers sarcastically.

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

Shut up.

GRANDPA

Jaylen, watch your language.

JAYLEN

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

GRANDPA

Madison.....cool it ok?

Timothy tries to redirect the conversation to ease tensions.

TIMOTHY

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

MADISON

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

JAYLEN

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

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

GRANDMA

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

Timothy stands up and bows his head in thanks.
TIMOTHY
Thank you kindly ma'am. Glad for home cooked meals, been eating fast food lately.

He rubs his stomach with a slight smile.

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

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

TIMOTHY
Mmmmmmm

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

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

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

TIMOTHY
Everything was great! Even better than my mom's. But don't tell her.

JAYLEN
We won't tell, promise.

Timothy looks at his watch in surprise.

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

JAYLEN
Grandpa he don't have to go now does he? We don't have school.
GRANDPA
He's been kind enough to spend
time with us today. He's probably
tired.

The kids exhale and whine.

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

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

GRANDMA
Glad you enjoyed it. You're
welcome anytime.

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

TIMOTHY
Almost forgot....Hope you like it.

GRANDMA
I'm sure I will.

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

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

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

TIMOTHY
Listen, if you want to hang out
with me.....you must respect
girls..ok?
JAYLEN
Why couldn't I have a brother.....

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

JAYLEN
Really?

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

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

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

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

JAYLEN
Aye Aye Sergeant!

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

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

GRANDMA
Ok everybody, time for bed.
The kids moan in disapproval.

EXT. BEACH BY THE PIER - DAY

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

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

SANDCASTLE JUDGE
(Loud speaker)
Judging starts in 30 minutes. When the horn sounds, please stop working and come to the judging area.

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

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

TIMOTHY
Yep, Jesus is the reason for the season.

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

JAYLEN
We just need a north star.

He sits on the sand and continues thinking.
JAYLEN
Oh I know, sparklers! Ya got any?

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. BEACH BY THE PIER - MOMENTS LATER

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

A LOUD HORN SOUNDS.

SANDCASTLE JUDGE
(Loud Speaker)
Thanks to all the teams for their excellent work. Our first annual Christmas in the sand is a huge success. We raised $5,000 for (MORE)
SANDCASTLE JUDGE (cont'd)
"Beach Services" charity.

Applause from the crowd.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jaylen whispers to Timothy with a hopeful smile

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

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

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

SANDCASTLE JUDGE
The judges were unanimous in this selection. The Manger Scene by Timothy Smith and his son Jaylen wins first place. The sparklers (MORE)
Roaring clapping and hooping runs through the crowd as Jaylen and Timothy walk to the podium. The announcer hands Timothy the microphone.

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

Timothy hands the mic to Jaylen.

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

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE – DAY

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

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

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

Madison holds up her nails which are black and white. She then puts her feet close to the webcam to try to show them.
NOELLE
Grandma and I, not me and grandma. 
Come on missy, you know the proper English.

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

MADISON
Ok mom, Grandma and I.

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

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

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

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

JACKSON
Biscuits sounds great right about now.

MADISON
Oh, mom dad. I gota to the bathroom.

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

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

(MORE)
JACKSON (cont'd)

trophies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Noelle folds her arms, exhales loudly and frowns slightly at Jaylen.
NOELLE
Mr. Jaylen let's be nice...ok?

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

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

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

Grandpa lifts his hand in surrender.

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

JACKSON
Hahah Ok dad. We land at 4 oclock.

EXT. BEACH BY THE PIER - AFTERNOON

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

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

GRANDMA
Not sure honey. Let's go say hi anyway.
Ace is barking and wagging his tail as they walk up to Timothy.

GRANDMA
Hello Timothy. Chilly out side huh?

TIMOTHY
Yes ma'am it is.

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

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

TIMOTHY
He's a good kid.

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

Things are quiet for a minute.

TIMOTHY
Guess the parents will be here this evening huh?

GRANDMA
Yes they arrive in a few hours.

TIMOTHY
Yeah.

Timothy is looking past grandma. He doesn't invite further conversation.
GRANDMA
Do you have a family......I mean of your own

TIMOTHY
Yeah, in Tennessee.

GRANDMA
Do you have pictures of them?

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

GRANDMA
Twins? Beautiful.

TIMOTHY
My wife Candice and the boys Jaylen and Jayson.

GRANDMA
Sorry you can't spend Christmas with them

TIMOTHY
Yeah, me to. (Long Pause) Sucks.

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

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

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

GRANDMA
Have you been to Sharky's restaurant? It's about 2 miles down Front Beach Road.
TIMOTHY
Yeah, I ate some oysters there...pretty good.

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

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

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

TIMOTHY
Mmmmm I'll keep that in mind.

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

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

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

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

Timothy is still disengaged in conversation. Grandma realizes he wants to be alone.
GRANDMA
Well it was good talking with you
Tim, Merry Christmas.

TIMOTHY
Yeah you too.

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE - EVENING

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

JACKSON
Alright kids, it's bed time.

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

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

JACKSON
Son, you were sleeping...hahaah snoring.

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

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

JACKSON
Yeah we have a big day tomorrow and you can stay up late tomorrow if you want. But bedtime now...no static.
The kids reluctantly stand up, rub their eyes and stumble to the bedroom.

CUT TO BEDROOM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JACKSON
Grandma told me he was good to you guys. I need to go by and thank him.
MADISON
He'll probably be sitting in his beach chair looking at the water... as usual

Jackson looks at his watch and then at Noelle.

NOELLE
This late? It's chilly outside.

MADISON
He has PTSD.

JACKSON
He does?

MADISON
Yeah I heard grammy and papa talking about it.

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

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

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

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

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

JACKSON
Nice...what did I do to deserve that?
NOELLE
You're a good man, a good father
and a good son to your parents.
(Pause) I'm lucky to have you.

JACKSON
Mmmmm mom says never argue with a
woman.

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

NOELLE
Coming to bed?

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

NOELLE
Want me to come?

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

NOELLE
Divorced?

JACKSON
Not sure.

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

EXT. BEACH BY THE PIER - NIGHT

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

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

JACKSON
Sorry man.

TIMOTHY
It's aigh't.

TIMOTHY
You Sergeant Smith? I'm Jackson, Jaylen's Dad.

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

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

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

TIMOTHY
Thanks! That kid remembers everything.

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

TIMOTHY
It's all good. He's alright.

JACKSON
He can be a stinker for sure. Hahah. (Pause) You Air Force?
TIMOTHY
Yep. Just back from the sand box.

JACKSON
82nd Airborne here. Got back last year.

TIMOTHY
See any action?

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

TIMOTHY
I got you. Same here.

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

JACKSON
Mind if I sit?

TIMOTHY
Nope go for it.

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

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

TIMOTHY
Nice.

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

They both have a light chuckle.
TIMOTHY
Bet wifey's glad.

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

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

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

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

JACKSON
Tim, you got a family?

Timothy exhales and closes his eyes.

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

Tim opens both hands and nods.

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

Timothy drinks from his thermos.
JACKSON
Yeah bud I got ya. Same thing happened to me after my last deployment.

TIMOTHY
Sucks. How'd ya keep it together?

JACKSON
Counseling.

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

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

TIMOTHY
You're a better man than me.

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

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

JACKSON
You're right man, women do try to change you.
TIMOTHY
She marries a military man and wants me to be touchy feely. I can't be like that on the battle field. How can you.....you know just switch it off when you come back?

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

TIMOTHY
It turns you into someone else. I can't switch from a warrior to a soccer dad. Sometimes I wonder if living is even worth it anymore. I just want to check out.

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

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

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

NOELLE
Jack ....honey is that you?

JACKSON
Yeah over here

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

JACKSON
This is my wife Noelle.....this is Sergeant Smith...uh Tim
Timothy sticks his hand out to shake Noelle's, but she quickly grabs Timothy and hugs him. She pulls back and smiles at Tim.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOELLE
Tim will you join us for a Christmas eve crab boil?
Timothy is uncertain looking around thinking.

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

TIMOTHY
Uh....

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

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE- BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

JACKSON
Hummm maybe

NOELLE
What's his wife's name?

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

Jackson puts down his phone in exasperation.

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

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

JACKSON
Noelle, stay out of it!

She bends down smiling and puckers up.

NOELLE
Give me a kiss honey.....mmmmmm

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

Jackson reaches over and turns off the lights.

EXT. BEACH BY THE PIER - MORNING

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

NOELLE
Good news! I found Sergent Smith's wife and sent her a Facebook message.
Jackson puts down his phone and exhales in frustration.

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

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

Jackson is exasperated and looks to his father.

**JACKSON**
Dad help!

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

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

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

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

**GRANDPA**
So you guys are taking off in the morning huh?

**JACKSON**
Yea dad. Stopping in Atlanta to see her folks for a couple days. Then heading back to DC.
GRANDMA
It's been a blessing to have the kids with us. Sure will miss them when you go to Japan.

GRANDPA
They kept us on our toes. Remembered every promise we made to them. Hahaha even things we said in passing.

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

JACKSON
Honey Are you still going to Pier Park shopping?

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

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

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

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

NOELLE
I hope Timothy joins us. Would do him good to be around people.
GRANDMA
You're right. He was a different person at the house. He was laughing with the kids and having fun.

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

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

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

JACKSON
Ok. What was that about?

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

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

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

Grandpa stands up and brushes off sand.

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

GRANDMA
Go on Thomas Drive, by Captain Anderson's. You can get it fresh, just as the fishermen
GRANDMA (cont'd)
offload their catch.

Jackson stands up gathers his stuff.

JACKSON
See you ladies later on.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE-PATIO - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

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

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

TIMOTHY
Go out guys...here is comes.

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

TIMOTHY
Good catch
JAYLEN
Throw it...I'm going out.

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

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

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

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

JACKSON
Yo dude, glad ya came

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

TIMOTHY
I could smell it all the way to my house.

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

GRANDMA
Santa's arrived.

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

A small boat pulls along side the big pirate ship and Santa gets in with two big velvet red sacks and an elf helper. The boat speeds towards the shore. When the boat gets right on
the beach, Santa and his elf helper get out, each with a red velvet bag.

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

KIDS AT THE BEACH.
Yes Santa!

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

SANTA'S ELF
What's your name little boy?

BOY AT THE BEACH
Addison.

SANTA'S ELF
Santa do you have a present for Addison whose 6 years old.

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

SANTA'S ELF
What is your name?

LITTLE BOY
Thomas

SANTA'S ELF
Do you have something for Thomas whose 3 years old?

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

SANTA
Ho Ho HO, I see a pretty little girl here. What's your name?
Madison shyly walks up to Santa while looking back at her parents for reassurance.

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

SANTA'S ELF
I bet Santa has something special for Madison.

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

MADISON
Thank you Santa.

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

INT. BEACH HOUSE-LIVING ROOM - EVENING

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

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

Grandma pats Tim on the back.

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

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

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

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

Jaylen walks up and stands next to Timothy.

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

Jackson looks at Timothy with a smile.

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

JAYLEN
Awwwww dad!

INT. SHARKY'S RESTURANT - NIGHT

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

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

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

MEREDITH
He's giving someone a ride. Should be here in a few.
The pastor has the microphone and announces the service is ready to start.

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

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

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

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

Jackson hands Meridith the DVD.

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

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

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

Jackson is shocked and stutters.

JACKSON
What? What? How how in the world?

He looks at Noelle who is smiling broadly. Grandma folds her hand and closes her eyes, tears form.
GRANDMA
Thank God. Where's Tim?

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

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

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

THE TWINS
Daddy Daddy!

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

TIMOTHY
I...how did you...

Candice looks at Noelle and then at William.

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

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

Candice points to William who is all smiles and pats Timothy on the back.
WILLIAM
Remember, I fly for the Airlines. We get buddy passes for free flights. Cant think of a better way to use them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. BEACH HOUSE-DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Everyone is standing outside Grandma's house as Noelle and Jackson prepare to leave. Jackson is dragging two suit cases and two wrapped around his chest. Timothy runs over and relieves his Jackson of two of the suit cases and helps him pack it up. They are ear shot away from everyone.
TIMOTHY
I can't tell you...uh...thanks man.
You wife is incredible.

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

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

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

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

NOELLE
Ooohhh More male bonding huh? I love it.

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

TIMOTHY
You're funny lady.

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

TIMOTHY
Sure will. Hey I'll be in the DC area in the spring for my parent's 30th anniversary, maybe we can link up.
NOELLE
Please do! Jaylen will love it.
Don't forget now.

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

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

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

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

END OF MOVIE