

The Celebration

By

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Logline: A stay-at-home dad meets his buddies at a pub to celebrate a special day he desperately wants to avoid.

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FADE IN:

1

INT. PUB - DAY

1

Three men of various ages, CHARLIE COX (42), SAMUEL JOHNSON (41) and SHAUN SWIFT (32), sit at a table near the front window of a lively pub chatting and drinking PINTS.

SHAUN  
Is he on his way?

CHARLIE  
I talked to him this morning.

Charlie looks at his watch.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
He said 2 o'clock.

SAMUEL  
Relax guys. He'll be here.

SHAUN  
Hey! There he is now!

Standing in the doorway of the pub is JACK BUTLER (49).

SHAUN  
Jack over here!

Jack sees his friends and walks over.

SHAUN  
Didn't think you were going to show!

All three men go to GREET Jack, SHAKE his hand, and HUG him.

Jack sits down. His clothes look as if he slept in them.

SAMUEL  
Today is your day buddy!

Samuel raises his MUG to Jack.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)  
We're way ahead of you.

Samuel gets the attention of a WAITER (23) near them.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)  
Get Jack here a pint of the Amber Wheat.

(CONTINUED)

The waiter points at Samuel, nods and goes to get another beer.

The waiter walks by a FEMALE PATRON (30) with a newspaper.

CLOSE ON front page HEADLINE:

PRESIDENT AMELIA REINHART CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF CAREGIVER BILL BECOMING LAW.

A photo shows a smiling middle-aged woman standing in front of a slightly different looking AMERICAN FLAG.

BACK TO:

Shaun finishes his beer and smiles at the group.

SHAUN

Hey! I got some good news. I've found a compatible companion match. She's meeting me tomorrow night.

SAMUEL

You finally found somebody!

Charlie, Samuel and Shaun all laugh. Jack sits expressionless.

The waiter brings Jack's BEER.

SAMUEL

Keep 'em coming! If you see our glasses half full, bring us another.

WAITER

I'll start a tab.

SAMUEL

(winking)  
You do that.

JACK

I'm going to miss it.

SAMUEL

You've done a great job, Jack.

Charlie pats Jack on the back.

CHARLIE

Not everyone can say their daughter will be working in Washington as a Senator's aide.

SAMUEL

Did you get Megan on her way this morning?

JACK

She and Caroline said their goodbyes.

SHAUN

Sounds as if Megan is a go-getter like her mom. Caroline made partner at the firm right?

JACK

Yes.

SAMUEL

See? They couldn't have achieved their success without you taking care of things at home.

Jack takes a long drink from his mug.

JACK

I'm obsolete now.

CHARLIE

All of us will go through this Jack.

JACK

I need to go to the bathroom.

Samuel holds up his empty mug.

SAMUEL

Find that waiter too!

2

INT. PUB BATHROOM - DAY

2

Jack walks into the bathroom, locks the door, stands at the sink and looks at himself in the mirror.

JACK

No, no, no. I can't do this.

Jack takes a PHOTOGRAPH out of his WALLET.

CLOSE ON:

A picture of Jack with his young daughter MEGAN (10). They are at a playground holding ICE CREAM BARS. Chocolate ice cream is SMEARED on Jack's face and they're both laughing.

(CONTINUED)

Jack softly touches the photograph and begins to cry.

JACK  
It's not fair.

FLASHBACK TO:

3

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

3

Jack is pushing his daughter on a SWING SET.

MEGAN  
Higher daddy!

JACK  
Not too high or you might fly to  
the moon!

MEGAN  
That's okay! Woooo!

JACK  
I got an idea. Want some ice cream?

MEGAN  
YES!

Jack slows down the swing.

JACK  
Come on before I change my mind.

Jack and Megan walk over to an ICE CREAM VENDOR (24).

MEGAN  
I want chocolate daddy!

JACK  
Two chocolate bars, please.

ICE CREAM VENDOR  
Right away!

The ice cream vendor hands Jack the bars and holds out a  
COMPUTER TABLET.

ICE CREAM VENDOR  
That'll be two credits.

Jack puts his thumb on the tablet.

(CONTINUED)

ICE CREAM VENDOR  
Thank you.

JACK  
Will you take a picture of us?

ICE CREAM VENDOR  
Sure.

Jack hands the ice cream vendor his PHONE.

MEGAN  
Daddy! Look at this!

Jack kneels down to look at Megan. She takes her ice cream bar and puts chocolate on his face.

JACK  
Hey, you!

ICE CREAM VENDOR  
Okay, guys smile!

A photo is taken of Jack and Megan laughing.

BACK TO:

4

INT. PUB BATHROOM - DAY

4

Jack puts the photo into his pants pocket.

JACK  
I'm not going to do it. She needs me.

He goes to the bathroom window and tries to open it, but it won't move.

JACK  
Damn!

A KNOCK is heard on the door.

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
Jack! Someone here wants to see you.

(beat)

Jack?

JACK

Okay. I'll be out in a minute.

Jack takes a deep breath, composes himself and walks out.

5

INT. PUB - DAY

5

Jack walks back to his friends and stops.

Sitting at the table is his grown daughter MEGAN (23).

MEGAN

Hey, daddy.

Megan stands and HUGS Jack.

JACK

Megan. You should be in Washington.

MEGAN

I know. I wanted to check up on you. You were acting weird this morning.

Jack takes his daughter's hands into his own.

JACK

You need to go. I'll be fine.

MEGAN

(smiling)

Why aren't you excited? You're finally getting your award today.

JACK

I don't think I can do it.

Megan looks at her father. Her smile disappears.

MEGAN

You have too. The plans are in place.

Samuel, Charlie and Shaun stare at Jack.

SAMUEL

What are you saying, Jack?

JACK

I'm not going this afternoon.

MEGAN

Dad. You'll embarrass our family.

Megan's PHONE rings. She looks at it.

MEGAN

It's mom. I'll be right back.

Megan walks away from the table.

Jack looks around. His breathing is quicker.

CHARLIE

You better calm down Jack.

JACK

Stop acting like this normal!

Jack points at Charlie.

JACK (CONT'D)

You have two daughters almost of age.

Jack looks at Samuel.

JACK (CONT'D)

Samuel. Your little princess will be all grown up before you know it.

SAMUEL

Yes and one day I'll receive my award too just like you.

Megan walks back to the table.

MEGAN

Now, dad about what I said earlier.

JACK

I'm leaving.

MEGAN

I love you dad, but this won't work.

JACK

I...AM...LEAVING. I'm not going.

MEGAN

But your appointment.

JACK

There is more to my life I want to experience.

MEGAN

You can't do this dad. This is the way things are done. You'll put shame on our family.

JACK

It's not right! This is insane! Have you actually thought about how crazy this is?

SAMUEL

Calm down. You're going to the resort brother. It's award day!

CHARLIE

I think you should take it down notch Jack. You're making a scene.

JACK

GOOD!

Customers in the pub have their PHONES out videoing Jack's rant.

JACK (CONT'D)

My wife said goodbye to me this morning like I was going to the grocery store.

Jack looks at Megan.

JACK (CONT'D)

You had twin brothers. Your mother never wanted you to know this information. I secretly gave them names. Alex and Kenny. They should be both close to 30 now. I often wonder how they are and if they look like me. It broke my heart to give them up. Your mother just handed them over to the training camp like it was nothing.

MEGAN

Oh, dad.

JACK

I understand there are others like me. People who understand the Caregiver Law is murder.

(CONTINUED)

The pub door swings open.

Three female SOLDIERS, wearing white one piece JUMPSUITS, HELMETS with FACE GUARDS and carrying MACHINE GUNS, go to the table.

An official GOVERNMENT TYPE WOMAN (40s) walks in behind them.

GOVERNMENT WOMAN

Jack Butler, you are to accompany us to Resort B99A for your award ceremony.

JACK

(surprised)

It's not four o'clock!

Jack looks at his friends.

JACK

My appointment is at four!

GOVERNMENT WOMAN

We've received word from your wife your caregiver duties are officially over and you're planning to run. We're here to make sure you keep your appointment.

Jack looks at his daughter and begins to cry.

JACK

You? Turned me in? Why? Baby no!

GOVERNMENT WOMAN

Please, Mr. Butler. I suggest you calm down and follow us to...

JACK

Just say what it really is! It's an extermination chamber!

GOVERNMENT WOMAN

Now, Mr. Butler

JACK

I don't want to die. NO!

SAMUEL

Hey, hey, hey Jack. It's going to be okay. This is an honor.

(CONTINUED)

JACK  
You're a blind fool. Am I the only  
one who is fully awake?

Jack attempts to escape, kicking down chairs, but a soldier stops him and ties his hands behind his back.

JACK (CONT'D)  
NO! Please! Let me go. I don't want  
to die!

The soldiers drag Jack outside screaming.

GOVERNMENT WOMAN  
Your government thanks you, Ms.  
Butler.

Megan crosses her right arm and puts a fist over her heart.

MEGAN  
I am always humbled to be a perfect  
citizen.

Megan nods at Charlie, Samuel and Shaun.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry I couldn't have a beer  
with all of you. I appreciate  
everything you caregivers do.

Megan walks away.

Charlie, Samuel and Shaun look at each other for a long moment.

SAMUEL  
So, Shaun has found a companion!

CHARLIE  
(laughing)  
How about that! Good job!

SAMUEL  
No, great job!

SHAUN  
Thanks, guys.

Shaun doesn't smile and just stares at his beer.

FADE OUT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

11.

THE END