

SOMETIMES MIRACLES HIDE
by
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FADE IN:

FLASHBACK

INT. BEDROOM - TWILIGHT

A squeaky door knob creaks as it turns, moonlight cascading on the bassinet.

STAN REYNOLDS, 33, sporting a day's beard growth and a premature silver lining along his close shaved hairline. Tattoo of a lightning bolt symbolizes strength and vanity. His sun-drenched body is mapped with veins. A trickle bead of sweat weaves its way down his pulsating temple. Instinctively, he reaches toward his holster.

Holster, no gun.

Intruder peers inside, ignoring Stan and ELENA REYNOLDS, 32, his wife and sleeping Spanish beauty, his eyes fixed on the prize, the bassinet. Time slows to a stop as the intruder reveals a knife raising the shiny sliver blade to execute...

STAN
(leaping)
Noooooooo!

Time starts. He misses his chance, the deed is done, his wife and son are gone.

Falling on the floor, wailing...

ELENA
(sitting upright,
matter of factly)
You let our baby die. You wanted
him to die so you could you be
with *her* didn't you? You killed us
both. Why did you let us die?

Opening his eyes, he relives the pain, empty bassinet, picture of a pregnant Elena. He reaches for the bottle of Jack, spilling half into his mouth and half onto his chest, he throws the bottle to the wall and, in typical Stan fashion, destroys the nightstand, bassinet and most of the bedroom.

Stan plays broken answering machine, repeatedly...

DR. (O.S.)
... Hello Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds,
congratulations, you're having a
baby boy...congratulations, you're
having a baby boy...

FLASHBACK

INT. CAR - DAY

MEL TOKAR, 60, is taking his daughter and grandson to lunch on Sunday after church. It is a pastor's prerogative. Bible, pages worn, adorns the dash, in gold script, *Pastor Tokar*. The family is all smiles as they round the bend. He gazes in the mirror at his grandson, CONNOR MORRIS, 4, sitting contently in his big boy car seat. Rounding Big Oak Curve east...

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - DAY

66 year old, male, redneck, swigging beer, driving a beat up old Chevy truck, *Bob Seger* playing, "*Like a Rock...*" Drunk as a skunk and happy to be driving, deer antlers adorn the hood, rusted rear bumper with a MADD sticker on it. Stereotypes apply. Rounding Big Oak Curve west...

Metal meets deer antler, bodies thrown violently, metal pierces flesh, Mel's radio plays *George Jones "Amazing Grace."* Redneck, daughter, wearing a new sterling silver cross bent by her contused body, she is crushed beyond life, the steering wheel saves Mel the brunt of the "accident." Connor pinned, mangled, bleeding from the left side of the head, alive. Connor takes the impact through ejection, EMT's brings his mangled body back to life, what is left of it.

He survives, barely, EMT's place the only symbol left of his mother in his small hand, the bloodied and bent cross.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

EXT. BAR - MIDNIGHT

The bar has emptied out, 2 or 3 regulars. Stan and DAVID COOPER, 30, working side job security for the money that cops don't make. Business as usual, kicking along the occasional drunk. SHEILA COOPER, 29, pulls up in the ultimate red corvette, classic, with side pipes. Fit, sexy, buxom, she is a welcome distraction. Her eyes fixed on Stan as she pulls up to talk to her husband of 5 years, David. Stan and Sheila exchange intimate glances, knowingly, and she revs off, leaving a little smell of rubber and whorish, wickedly French perfume.

STAN

Hey kid, you better keep working these side jobs with me.

DAVID

I'm doing everything I can,
working two side jobs...I guess
that is the key to keeping them
happy?

STAN

And they say money doesn't bring
happiness. Give me a dollar and
watch me smile.

As they exchange words, a subtle, small commotion takes place in the background. Two men and a car. A beaten and broken up and down, blue Toyota. A couple of pops - pop, pop, pop. Small caliber gun fire, two men running from the bar to the Toyota.

Instinctively, David runs toward them, Stan for the moment frozen, small caliber gunfire again, pop, pop, pop. David free falls to his knees and looks surprised, first, at his chest, then to Stan, before he falls face first into the pavement. Stan goes for his weapon too late, about the same time the car is purposely bearing down on him, he is hit with such force it knocks him out of his shoes. He flies north, his left leg south.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Stan rubs his "new" leg or stump unknowingly, is it steel or titanium? He feels like he looks, unshaven and smelly, slumped in his wheelchair off to himself. Pain is an 11 out of 10.

He's in a room of victims...or patients, physical therapy people. Connor, present day age 13, bent cross on a new sterling silver chain. His smile lights the room, only dampened by his limp arm and leg and a crescent shaped hairless scar along the right side of his head. He travels from person to person high fiving, with his left hand, stopping only to play with his best friend, ANGEL ROMA, 8. One look reveals her secret, a child with Down Syndrome, not a Down Syndrome child. Their favorite game, Angel kicks the ball, Connor shuffles to get it and pretends to fall, Angel falls, stomps with girlish laughter every time he does it. Small group of special needs children watch and laugh.

Mel walks in with DICK MENDELL, 30, aptly named, their ties and badges give them away as Internal Affairs.

DICK

(patting his leg)
Hey Stan, how's the leg?

STAN

Still hanging there and so are you. How are you, DICK?

DICK

(pulling up a chair)

Sheila been to visit you? Ohhhh, that's right, she doesn't want to see you anymore after you killed her husband.

Stan grabs him by the tie and pulls him to his wheelchair. Noise and activity in the room stop.

STAN

Look at me, I lost my leg you bastard!

Mel steps in and releases Stan's grip from his tie.

MEL

(to Dick)

Wait outside.

DICK

(sarcastically)

Pray for him, preacher, maybe God will show him mercy, but I won't.

Mel pulls up a chair and sits next to him eye level.

STAN

Do you think I care what any of you say or think anymore?

MEL

You mean you did before? I know you don't care and that's the problem, Stan. In fact, the only person you've ever truly cared about...is you. But you are fine, aren't you. You lost your leg but hey, you are alive right?

STAN

He has no right to judge me, neither do you. You know he has a personal vendetta against me.

MEL

(waxing poetically)

There was a king who had many sheep and a poor man who had one.

(more)

5.

MEL (cont'd)
The king stole the sheep from the
poor man and then he had none.

Mel gets close to him so he can look him directly in the eye.

MEL
(continuing)
You stole another man's sheep. You
were blessed and you took
advantage of the situation. What
you thought you did in private is
now made known to everyone.
Private sin has public results.
Don't look to me for sympathy or
judgment, that's not up to me. My
job is to know and reveal the
truth and I will know the truth.

Stan looks down and away.

MEL
(continuing; moving
to see him eye to
eye)
I know about your wife and son.

STAN
You don't know anything about me
and I could care less what
Internal Affairs thinks. IA
doesn't care about cops.

MEL
This isn't about IA nor is it
about cops. This is about you and
your reckless actions and how it
cost Officer Cooper his life.

STAN
Can you do anything worse than has
already been done? Look at me, I'm
crippled and have nothing!

Connor enters the picture at that moment breaking the silence.

CONNOR
(speaks with lisp
from accident)
Hi Grandpa, how are you?

MEL
Connorrrr!!! I'm so glad to see
you. How was therapy?

CONNOR
Sucks...

MEL
And Angel?

Angel wanders over to Connor tugging on his hand wanting him to play.

MEL
(continuing)
Hi Angel. Is this kid bothering you?

ANGEL
Nooooo.

MEL
I will arrest him if you want me to? I'm a police officer you know...

ANGEL
No. Connor is my friend, I love him.

ANGEL
(continuing; pointing to Stan's leg)
What happened?

Moments of uncomfortable silence.

CONNOR
Awkwarddddd!

STAN
(taken aback, rubbing his leg)
Ummm, well, I was in a car accident and I hurt my leg and lost it and I'm crippled.

ANGEL
I like your new leg.

CONNOR
Yeah, me too, its titanium like my head.

Connor makes a motion as if to knock on his head.

Angel's mom MARIA ROMA, 42, Latin, pretty, lines on face map motherly care for special needs daughter.

She sternly places her hand along Angel and Connor's shoulders to guide them back to physical therapy.

MARIA

Guys, ready to come back? Oh,
"Hello Mel."

MEL

Hi Maria, have these kids been
bothering you?

CONNOR

Grandpa...

CONNOR

(continuing; to Stan)
And by the way, it's "physically
challenged..."

CONNOR

(continuing; making
quotation marks with
his fingers)
We don't use the word "crippled,"
get it right, chief.

MARIA

(extends hand)
Hi, I'm Maria, I'm Angel's mom.

MEL

(Introducing)
Oh...excuse me, Maria, Stan. Stan,
Maria.

Stan smiles. Maria starts to walk away and then pauses...

MARIA

(to Stan)
You know they call it physical
therapy for a reason...

INT. STAN'S HOUSE - DUSK

Struggling to get his leg out of the cab, Stan arrives home to see his broken, picked through furniture on the lawn and a bright red sticker labeled, EVICTION, on his padlocked door. He takes his leg off and breaks the door open hobbling inside. The small place is empty, cold, vacant, He finds what he is looking for taped to the underside of the sink cabinet, his gun and a picture of a pregnant Elena. On the floor, there is also a worn picture of a young, African American boy who appears developmentally challenged.

A crumpled picture of Stan as a high school wrestling champ with a medal around his neck.

Kneeling on the floor he carefully places the pictures on the floor in front of him and readies his weapon. Tears stain the floor as he places the gun in his mouth...

Unbeknownst to him a silent Mel stands in the doorway.

MEL

So that's your answer?

Stan caught off guard instinctively swings his weapon around and trains it on Mel. Mel approaches and kneels until the weapon is level with his head.

STAN

(shaking)

I killed them, don't you get it?
All of them!

STAN

(continuing; holding
his leg in his hand)

You think I care about this? You
think this matters to me? I wish
I was dead.

MEL

I don't know anyone's life that
hasn't been touched by adversity.
You know God has a plan for all
this.

Stan still has his gun trained on Mel.

STAN

(yelling, gun shaking)

Don't tell me that! Don't give me
the world's psycho babble BS. Tell
me something that has meaning,
purpose!?

MEL

This isn't the first time I've had
a gun pointed at me.

He lowers the gun. Silence pervades the two lost in thought.
With a slight sardistic smile...

STAN
 (quietly,
 sarcastically)
 Adversity? Really? Is that what
 you tell your crippled grandson?

That nail hit the nerve. In one fell swoop Mel lands a right on Stan that launches him across the floor. The gun flies out of his hand, picked up by Mel who presses it into his face.

MEL
 Don't you ever mention that again,
 don't you ever mention him again!
 I'll kill you, you understand, I
 will kill you myself. You won't
 have to put yourself out of your
 misery.

Mel drops the weapon and walks to the door and waits outside. Looking across the furniture laden lawn, he finds a picture of a young Stan and Elena...

Stan hobbles up behind him, bleeding from the mouth.

STAN
 She was my high school sweetheart,
 cheerleader, I played on the
 wrestling team, we got married
 after high school. I drank,
 cheated, but Elena never gave up,
 she said we were family and
 families don't give up.

Stan hobbles to the steps below Mel to see him eye to eye.

STAN
 (continuing)
 I told her I had to work a detail,
 I was spending the night with
 Sheila...

STAN
 (continuing)
 While I was having an affair...a
 robber entered my house and saw
 Elena, he figured he'd have an
 easy time with her because she was
 pregnant...he didn't know her too
 well.

STAN

(continuing)

I'm sure he didn't plan on killing her, I'm sure he didn't mean to knife her...well, you can guess what happened when I get home. She was dead, bled out, my unborn son was dead and here I am - alive. Well, at least part of me...

Mel looks into his eyes forlornly and hands him the picture.

MEL

(looking at his leg)

You deserve what happened to you...Connor and I didn't.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - DAY

Stan is sitting in the park near the swings thinking about all the events that have taken place. A little boy who would be about the age of his son approaches.

LITTLE BOY

Can you push me?

Stan is somewhat taken aback.

STAN

Sure.

A concerned mother quickly stops by. She assesses Stan and his leg and determines him not to be a threat.

CONCERNED MOTHER

Sorry.

STAN

No, it's fine.

She is looking at his leg.

STAN

(continuing)

Kind of sticks out doesn't it?

CONCERNED MOTHER

I'm so sorry.

LITTLE BOY

Push me again.

Stan looking towards the mother.

