

The Lottery Ticket

By

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FADE IN

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joseph's (mid-30's) eyes widen and bulge.

He eyes a small piece of paper.

JOSEPH
I won. I won? I WON!!

CUT TO:

Joseph, a medium built man with a youthful joy on his face and maturity in his eyes, sits at a small table with his daughters JENNY (12), who is mature beyond her years and LUCY (9) his blonde haired blue eyed sweet as candy youngest daughter. The board game "Clue" is on the table in mid-play. Joseph is holding up his Clue sheet.

JENNY
Again!? Ergh.

LUCY
Let's play again!

JOSEPH
It's time for bed.

LUCY
Ahh...

Jenny begins to fold up the board. Lucy is reluctant, but picks up the various pieces.

The girls walk down their home's hallway.

LUCY'S BEDROOM
Joseph joins Lucy in her room.

Lucy is looking at a picture of her mom in an arts and craft homemade frame, one that used plenty of glitter. It is clear the woman in the picture is the biological mother of the two girls based upon physical similarities.

Lucy kisses the frame then sets it down.

LUCY
Good night mommy.

Lucy gets in to her bed, Joseph leans in to tuck her in. He notices a piece of glitter has made a home for itself on her forehead, he brushes it off with his thumb.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

You got a little glitter on your head.

Lucy tries to look up with her eyes, as if she could see her own forehead. The she returns her gaze to her dad.

LUCY

Daddy?

JOSEPH

Yes?

LUCY

How come you didn't eat dinner with us again?

JOSEPH

I'll eat the leftovers.

LUCY

But we didn't have any leftover.

Joseph pats his fit belly in jest.

JOSEPH

I'm big enough, you're the one growing.

LUCY

Daddy, when are we going to see Aunt Annie again.

Joseph's smile fades, but he fakes through and brings it back.

JOSEPH

Soon honey.

LUCY

You told me when Jenny and I fight we should always remember, family first.

She ends her statement with a re-affirming nod.

Joseph gives her a simple nod back, at a loss for words.

Lucy grabs Joseph by the sides of his face.

LUCY

And Daddy, I love you and you're going to do great in your job

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LUCY (cont'd)
interview tomorrow. Remember what
you tell me, if it's meant to be,
it'll be.

She punctuates this with a reassuring over-exaggerated nod
of her head, then lets go.

Joseph looks at her for a moment then replies.

JOSEPH
Thanks honey. And you're going to
do great on your spelling test.

LUCY
Let's not get ahead of ourselves.
One thing at a time.

JOSEPH
Okay, now go to sleep.

LUCY
Okay Daddy!

Joseph finishes tucking her in, then gets up and walks out.

He approaches Jenny's door and gives it a slight tap then
begins to open it.

JENNY (O.S.)
(shreaking)
Dad! I'm changing!

Joseph stops, then yells through the door.

JOSEPH
Sorry! Just wanted to tuck you in.

JENNY (O.S.)
I keep telling you, I'm too old for
tucking in dad. Goodnight.

Joseph hangs his head, a little smirk crosses his face.

INT. MILITARY BUNK ROOM AFGHANISTAN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A four year younger Joseph is lying in bed fast asleep.

CORPORAL (O.S.)
Sarge. Sarge. Sarge!

Joseph wakes with wide and confused eyes. He turns to look
at the man who woke him.

(CONTINUED)

A skinny CORPORAL (19) stands in his Air Force dessert camo work wear, panic spread over his face.

CORPORAL

Sarge, they said they need you at M-DOB-7 now. They have a drone up hot and loaded and the controls went haywire, they need you now!

JOSEPH

Okay. Now calm down Corporal.
(he smiles reassuringly)
We got this.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

BEDROOM

Joseph wakes from his dream, confused and anxious. He takes in a deep breath upon realization of where he is, and that he's safe.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - DAY

Joseph is ready for his job interview. He completes the knot in his tie then stares at himself in the mirror.

JOSEPH

First good interview in three months, don't screw this up.
(he takes in a deep breath)
If it's meant to be, it'll be.

He continues to stare, still trying to convince himself of his own words.

EXT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - DAY

Joseph picks flowers from his front yard.

He walks back towards his front door.

As he approaches the door he notices a final warning eviction notice hanging on the door.

He yanks the notice down.

INSERT - EVICTION NOTICE

15 day eviction warning for Joseph Felix.

BACK TO JOSEPH

(CONTINUED)

Joseph walks back inside.

JOSEPH (O.S.)
Come on girls, time for school.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Joseph sits in his idling car in the drop off area at his daughters' school. Jenny and Lucy get out of the clunker car Joseph is driving them in.

JOSEPH
Love you girls.

JENNY AND LUCY
Love you too.

Joseph drives away.

Jenny and Lucy walk towards the school.

SCHOOL YARD

KATIE(13), the obvious daughter of a well-to-do mom, approaches them.

KATIE
Your dad found a job yet?

JENNY
Shut-up Katie!

KATIE
(faked innocence)
Just asking.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

INTERVIEWING MANAGER (40's) is dressed in a basic off-the-rack JC Penney suit, sits behind an average desk in an average office. He closes a manila folder he has in front of him and sets it down on the desk.

Joseph is anxious.

INTERVIEWING MANAGER
Well, Joe, I think you have a great resume, but we need someone with a bit more recent programming experience. You being out for over two years, I just don't think...

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH
(interrupting but with
confidence)
I'll catch-on real quick.

INTERVIEWING MANAGER
Sorry Mr. Felix, but I just don't
have the resources to bring anyone
on who's not ready to hit the
ground running.

The Interviewing Manager stands and begins to, in a somewhat rude fashion, escort Joseph out the office.

INTERVIEWING MANAGER (CONT'D)
If you find something else and get
your programming skills up to date
and more non-military focused, then
come back and see me. Okay, thanks
for coming in.

INT. JOSEPH'S CAR - DAY

Joseph sits in his car, his mix of emotions leaving him numb and visibly disconnected. He looks up in to the rear-view mirror and discovers he has a piece of glitter on his forehead, he removes it with his thumb.

He looks down in the seat next to him and notices the flowers he picked earlier.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Joseph drives through the main gates.

Joseph kneels at the grave of his wife. He places the flowers he picked earlier down on her grave.

JOSEPH
(to the headstone/grave)
Well, I haven't found a job yet. I
had an interview today, but they
said I've been out of I.T. for too
long... that I couldn't keep up.
That my two years of taking care of
my dying wife put me behind. Screw
them. Don't worry, I'll find
something. I will provide for our
girls. Speaking of the girls...
they're... still wonderful and
beautiful and, they sure miss their
mother. We all do.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Joseph trudges in and begins looking around. He spots the man he is there to meet, his best friend KURT (30's), an average built man who's casual business attire makes him look older than he is.

Kurt waves Joseph over to the line where he is almost next to be served.

KURT

Hey, so, we celebrating?

JOSEPH

No.

KURT

What happened?

JOSEPH

Same story. Been out too long. These young guys straight out of college have passed me up.

KURT

How do they not appreciate that you were taking care of your terminally ill wife?

(starting to raise his voice)

I mean, the woman was dying of cancer, what the hell are you supposed to do?

Joseph looks around, embarrassed at his friends voice and attitude escalation.

JOSEPH

It is what it is. Something will come up. At least I sparkled.

The customer in front of Kurt and Joseph walks away. The BARISTA (19), a young disconnected looking woman, looks towards them.

BARISTA

Next.

Kurt looks toward the Barista then back to Joseph.

KURT

Whatcha having?

Joseph, his wallet in hand, looks inside and discovers a single crumpled ten-dollar bill.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

Umm...

He closes his wallet and puts it back in his pocket.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I'm good.

KURT

I got you.

Joseph looks embarrassed, but appreciative.

JOSEPH

Thanks.

CUT TO:

Joseph and Kurt sit down at a table in the coffee shop.

They each begin to sip their coffee.

Kurt looks to Joseph.

KURT

I got you a present.

Joseph looks confused.

JOSEPH

What?

Kurt pulls a lottery scratcher out from his pocket.

He slides it across the table.

KURT

It's called "Second Chance." I thought it was perfect.

JOSEPH

You didn't have to do that.

KURT

It was a buck. I figured, with everything you've been through, it'd be a little fun to play a game on me.

(he reaches in his pocket)

Here's a dime, scratch it.

Joseph takes the dime and begins to scratch the ticket.

Joseph's eyes open wide in excitement.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH
I won. I won!

The other patrons of the coffee shop look at Joseph in a mixture of irritation and curiosity.

KURT
Really? How much?

Joseph turns the ticket towards Kurt.

JOSEPH
\$100

Kurt is surprised and nods his head in approval.

KURT
Nice.

JOSEPH
(genuine happiness)
Hey, this is the best luck I've had
in awhile.
(looking at his friend in
appreciation)
Thanks buddy.

KURT
You're welcome, and now next time,
you're buying the coffee.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Jenny and Lucy are outside, waiting for their Dad in the pickup zone.

As they stand and wait as their friends get picked up by their mothers.

Lucy's normal bubbly demeanor is replaced by avoidance, staring at her shoes. Jenny stares ahead at nothing.

Joseph pulls up to the student pick-up. He rolls down the window.

JOSEPH
Come on girls!

They are slow to react, then walk to the car.

INT. JOSEPH'S CAR - DAY

Jenny and Lucy are in the backseat, each look out their window, neither of them speak.

Joseph looks at them in the rear view mirror, concerned.

JOSEPH
How was school girls?

Neither responds.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Huh?

Jenny makes eye contact through the mirror, then turns her head back away.

JENNY
Fine.

Lucy turns and looks at her dad.

LUCY
Daddy?

Joseph meets her eyes in the rear view mirror.

JOSEPH
Yes honey?

Lucy's eyes start to well up. She looks down.

LUCY
I miss mommy.

Joseph's eyes are still on Lucy via the rear view mirror. He looks forward and makes a decision.

JOSEPH
Who's up for a little fun tonight?

INT. KIDS FUN LAND - DAY

Joseph and the girls walk into Kids Fun Land (think John's Incredible Pizza). A Chuck-e-Cheese on super steroids that is well populated with those in the age ranges Jenny and Lucy are.

The smiles on the girls faces tell Joseph everything he needed to know, this is what they needed.

MONTAGE - JOSEPH AND THE GIRLS ENJOY KIDS FUN LAND

- Playing video games.
- Riding indoor roller coaster.
- Sitting and eating; the girls eat, Joseph does not.
- Playing a ticket game, and winning.
- Turning in tickets and walking away with prizes.

EXT. KIDS FUN LAND - DAY

The joy filled Felix family walk to their car, arms full of worthless prizes.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - DAY

BEDROOM

An alarm goes off. Joseph stirs.

KITCHEN

Joseph, groggy, walks in to the family kitchen. It's not much, but it's theirs.

He begins to prepare breakfast for his daughters.

LIVING ROOM

Lucy is sitting in her pajamas watching TV on a set that was probably produced in the 80's. A newscast plays.

The newscast describes the current record setting Super Mega Lotto numbers.

KITCHEN

Jenny comes in to the kitchen with her backpack on, ready for school.

Joseph pulls out a single Poptart from an already open package of two in the box, frustrated, he discovers this is the only one.

Lucy walks in.

Joseph splits the Poptart and gives each daughter one half.

He notices their disappointment.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

We'll stop by the store on the way home and get some cereal.

JENNY

What about lunch?

JOSEPH

We'll get some stuff for lunches too.

LUCY

(innocent)

But what about lunch today?

JOSEPH

(sheepish)

Tell the lunch lady you forgot cash today. They can't let you starve, right?

JENNY

Ms. Clayton said we can't do that anymore.

JOSEPH

Just do it please. We need to get going, I have another job interview today.

JENNY

Good.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Joseph, Jenny and Lucy arrive at their school. The girls get out and begin to walk away.

JOSEPH

Love you girls!

Lucy turns around with a big smile on her face.

LUCY

Love you daddy! Good luck on your job interview.

Jenny notices that Katie is watching and heard what Lucy just said. Jenny's face becomes flush. Nowhere to hide, she shrinks her body language as if to hide in plain site.

EXT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Joseph arrives at the office for the Sacramento Bee newspaper.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Jenny exits the girls bathroom when she is approached by Katie and some of Katie's friends.

Jenny tries to pass them but they cut her off.

KATIE
Dad still a hobo?

JENNY
He's not a hobo.

KATIE
He hasn't worked in years. Sounds like a hobo to me.

Katie's friends agree with her.

JENNY
Leave me alone.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Joseph walks up to the reception desk where the BEE RECEPTIONIST (30's), dressed in casual business attire, greets him.

BEE RECEPTIONIST
Good morning. How can I help you?

JOSEPH
Good morning. I have a 9:10 with Ted Fornton.

The receptionist is confused.

BEE RECEPTIONIST
Ted Fornton?

Joseph nods, noticing her confusion, anxiety now creeping onto his.

BEE RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Regarding?

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH
An employment interview?

The receptionist's confusion remains.

BEE RECEPTIONIST
Just you, or is someone with you?

JOSEPH
Just me.

BEE RECEPTIONIST
Huh. Okay, I'll let him know you're here. Go ahead and have a seat with the other applicants.

Joseph turns and goes to sit down.

He notices the other applicants also sitting. All of them teenage boys.

Joseph is confused.

The BOY (14) closest to him, dressed in what appears to be a Boy Scout like uniform, makes eye contact. Also confused as well as a little intimidated and worried, the boy decides to inquire of Joseph.

BOY
So, what route are you applying for?

Joseph's face and body language fail to hide his internal realization and aggravation that this interview isn't for what he thought it was.

EXT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - DAY

Joseph goes to pull in to his driveway when he realizes there is another car where his would normally go.

Realizing it's his mother's-in-law car he closes his eyes for a brief moment to reset, his knuckles turn white as he grips the steering wheel.

CLAIRE (50's)-- a woman who isn't afraid to show she is of some means with her attire, or to try and hide her age with cosmetics -- stands at Joseph's front door with her arms crossed and her foot tapping with impatience.

Joseph parks his car on the street.

He gets out and composes himself before greeting Claire.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH
Hello Claire. To what...

CLAIRE
(cutting Joseph off)
Did you get a job?

Joseph stops and takes in a deep breath.

Before Joseph can respond, Claire turns somewhat.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Didn't think so.

Joseph tightens his eyes closed and calms himself.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Well, are you going to let me in?

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

CAFETERIA

Jenny stands with a tray of food, facing the cashier waiting for payment. Jenny throws her tray down.

JENNY
(a mixture of screaming and
crying)
Fine! I'm not even hungry!

She runs away.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

SCHOOL YARD

Jenny is scrunched alone, hidden in the shadows between two buildings, seated in the fetal position, her knees pulled in close to her sobbing face.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - DAY

DINING ROOM

Claire sits down at the small four seat dining table. She brushes off non-existent dirt.

JOSEPH
Can I get you something Claire?

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

A hot cup of tea would be nice.
(she pauses)
If you have it.

Joseph goes to the kitchen as if to look for tea, even though he already knows he doesn't have any.

He looks through the empty cupboards, as if there were items to look through.

Claire can see glimpses of the bare cupboards, enough to make it clear this house lacks in food.

Disappointment spreads across Claire's face.

Joseph turns and sees the scowl.

JOSEPH

Sorry, don't seem to have any.

Claire GRUNTS a disapproving sound.

CLAIRE

I see you don't have much of anything. Including food for my grandchildren.

JOSEPH

The girls are doing just fine.

CLAIRE

Before my daughter passed, she would always ensure there was enough for the girls.

JOSEPH

Since *my wife* died, things have been difficult, but we'll make it through.

CLAIRE

Well, I hear the tab at the school for their lunches is past overdue and is now bordering on ridiculously late.

JOSEPH

How do you know...

CLAIRE

And that Jenny wasn't able to go on her class field trip because it wasn't paid for.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH
If you're offering to help, I
appreciate that Claire.

CLAIRE
I'm suggesting the girls come live
with me.

Joseph is frozen for a moment in shock.

JOSEPH
What?!

CLAIRE
They need a more stable financial
situation Joseph. And, they're
young girls, they need a woman.

JOSEPH
They need their father!

CLAIRE
They need food, a home, security.

Claire rises and heads to the door.

Joseph stews.

LIVING ROOM
Claire opens the door then turns and looks at Joseph.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I can provide for them better than
you can, it's that simple, and if
you loved them, you'd accept that.

Before he can react, his cellphone rings.

He takes it out of his pocket and notices the caller ID is
that of his daughters' school.

He answers it. Claire waits to exit so she may eavesdrop.

JOSEPH
Joseph Felix. Wait, Jenny? She did
what?

Claire looks on with a "see I told you so" look.

She turns and walks out without giving Joseph a moment to
respond.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

GYMNASIUM

A volleyball flies through the air.

The volleyball is bumped up by a player.

It's bumped by another.

It's spiked over the net by Jenny.

Joseph stands up in excitement. He is surrounded by dozens of other parents, friends and siblings of the players.

JOSEPH

Nice one Jenny!

He applauds her effort loud and proud.

Jenny looks at her dad. She rolls her eyes, embarrassed by how over-the-top he is in his excitement.

She turns away to get ready for the next play, a smile sneaks on her face.

More volleyball action ensues.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

Joseph, Jenny and Lucy walk out from the school gymnasium. Jenny is dressed in a volleyball jersey, Lucy in normal school clothes.

JENNY

Did you see that last serve?

JOSEPH

You know I did!

LUCY

She was all like...

(acts out in, over-dramatic
childhood fashion, serving the
ball)

...up and boom!

Joseph's happy expression changes.

JOSEPH

Jenny, we need to talk about--

She knows what he's going to say, and doesn't want to hear it, so she cuts him off.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

Did you go to the grocery store?

Joseph slows his pace.

JOSEPH

I had that interview then met with
Uncle Kurt, so no time today.

JENNY

Can we go now?

JOSEPH

Not tonight love.

JENNY

But we don't have anything for
breakfast.

JOSEPH

I'll get something tomorrow. I
think we still have some cereal
left.

JENNY

What about lunches?

Jenny's demeanor and tone turn from accusatory to shameful,
avoiding eye contact.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I had to promise we'd bring our own
lunches tomorrow.

Joseph stops walking and just looks at his children, his
face no longer able to hide the shame.

INT. VIC'S SUPERMARKET GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Joseph and his girls are walking down the cereal aisle.

Joseph's phone rings. Caller ID says it's his Uncle Fred.

JOSEPH

Girls, keep looking, I need to take
this.

The girls do as asked, Joseph answers his phone.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Hey, thanks for calling me back.

INTERCUT - VIC'S GROCERY STORE/FRED'S CAR LOT

(CONTINUED)

UNCLE FRED (late 50's)-- overweight, cheap in appearance and deficient of empathy -- sits in his office at his used car lot, an office that looks as cheap and worthless as the man who occupies it.

FRED

You said it was urgent. What do you need kid?

JOSEPH

I know you said you weren't able to help last time, but I'm really, really at the end here. I don't even have enough--

FRED

(interrupting)

Kid, I told you, I don't have it. Things have been slow.

A used car lot with busy activity is shown behind him.

JOSEPH

At this point, twenty to forty would help. Anything.

FRED

Twenty to forty dollars?

Fred looks at the phone in slight disgust.

FRED (CONT'D)

I just don't have it kid, but listen, things turn around I'll see what I can do. Okay, talk to you later.

Fred hangs up before Joseph has time to respond.

Lucy comes around the corner with a cereal box in her hand.

LUCY

How'd he become a Captain?

Joseph smiles.

JOSEPH

It was mutiny, he threw the old Captain, Captain Soggy, overboard.

Lucy shrugs in acceptance.

LUCY
How'd your job interview go dad?

JOSEPH
It wasn't the right fit honey. Now
put that back.

Lucy looks at her dad then at the cereal box, moving her pursed lips to one side to contemplate.

She puts the cereal back.

They begin to all together walk down another aisle.

LUCY
Daddy, why can't we get the cereal
with the sailor on it?

JOSEPH
It's too expensive honey.

JENNY
He means we're too poor.

JOSEPH
Jenny, you're in enough trouble as
it is, do not push me.

JENNY
What'd I do?

JOSEPH
Your principal called me today. One
of the reasons I have less money is
because I now have to pay for six
school lunches, lunches spilled not
eaten, and uniform cleaning. You're
lucky you aren't suspended.

JENNY
Maybe if you hadn't spent all our
money last night at Kid's Fun Land
we'd have had money for lunch
today.

JOSEPH
Seriously? You're blaming me for
taking you guys out for an evening
of fun as why you acted out today?

JENNY
Whatever.

Jenny walks off to another aisle in a huff.

(CONTINUED)

Lucy shrugs with indifference and starts to walk away too.

FRONT OF STORE

Joseph and the girls get in line. There is a heavy-set MAN IN LINE ahead of them with a large order and appears to easily be able to afford it. He is being helped by a CASHIER (40's) who is trying to be cheerful.

CASHIER

Have you gotten your ticket for the SuperMega Lotto?

MAN IN LINE

(slight chuckle)

I wouldn't know what to do with \$500 million.

CASHIER

Oh, it's up to over \$600 million now. Only a few minutes left.

MAN IN LINE

Maybe next time.

Joseph looks on with increasing interest.

The cashier finishes up the order. She hands the man his receipt.

MAN IN LINE

Thanks. Did you get your ticket?

CASHIER

I sure did.

Joseph looks over to the lottery machine at the front of the store.

MAN IN LINE

Well, if I see you next time, I guess that means you didn't win.

CASHIER

Right? Okay, you have a nice day.

Joseph looks down at his cash in his hand, the same single crumpled \$10 bill.

MAN IN LINE

You too. Good luck.

Joseph and his girls approach.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

I just realized I forgot my debit card, and I don't want to miss getting my lottery tickets, would you mind holding these for me? We'll be right back.

CASHIER

Better hurry, only a few minutes left before the cut-off at 7.

LUCY

(in protest)
But daddy...

JOSEPH

Shhh.. it'll be okay. Come on, let's go play a game.

Joseph walks away from the cashier and walks his girls to the lotto machine.

Joseph starts to use the machine to the protest of his daughters.

JENNY

Dad, you promised.

JOSEPH

I know, but, I've got a good feeling.

JENNY

(under her breath)
You don't even have a debit card.

Joseph tries to hurry through the screens.

JOSEPH

(to Jenny)
Here, push your birthday.
(to Lucy)
You too. Okay, and mine... and mommy's favorite number for the mega number. And, then nine quick picks, and... there we go.

He puts his \$10 bill in the auto feeder. It kicks it back out. He tries again, no success.

Joseph works to straighten the bill then tries again.

It is again spit out.

(CONTINUED)

He looks at the wall clock.

The analog clock reads less than a minute until 7pm.

Joseph begins a slight panic. He tries once again and it is again spit out.

His panic escalates.

The money goes in.

The ticket prints.

Joseph takes the ticket out and examines it in short order.

INSERT - LOTTERY TICKET

The time on the ticket states "6:59pm".

BACK TO JOSEPH

JOSEPH

We made it.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

LIVING ROOM

Jenny walks in the front door throwing her backpack down.

JENNY

So what are we supposed to have for dinner?

Joseph is next through the door, followed by Lucy.

JOSEPH

I'll fix something up, just calm down.

JENNY

Better not be more of those stupid beef noodles.

Jenny walks away in a huff.

Lucy just walks up to Joseph and hugs him best she can without standing on her toes.

LUCY

I'm okay with whatever daddy. Love you.

(CONTINUED)

She releases her love grip then skips away with a spring in her step.

KITCHEN

Joseph walks in and opens a cabinet. Packages of beef noodles are staring back at him.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - DAY (NEXT MORNING)

BEDROOM

The alarm clock next to Joseph's bed ticks from 6:29am to 6:30 and goes off.

Joseph is less than thrilled.

LIVING ROOM

Joseph walks in a zombie like trance. Walking past the TV he turns it on to "Good Day Sacramento."

KITCHEN

Joseph continues his walk to a cabinet. He grabs an empty box of Poptarts. He feels the empty box and remembers he is out. He comes out of his trance, frustrated and embarrassed once more.

LIVING ROOM

Lucy walks down the hall towards the living room. She's dressed very cute and ready for school, backpack and all.

KITCHEN

Joseph is trying to find something else in the kitchen when he hears Lucy in the living room.

LUCY (O.S.)

It's my birthday.

JOSEPH

(talking to the empty
cabinets)

Your birthday isn't until April
love.

LIVING ROOM

Lucy points to the TV.

LUCY

And Jenny's birthday too!

Joseph is confused and walks to Lucy to discover what she's talking about.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
And your birthday too daddy, and
mommy's favorite number.

ON TV SET

The TV screen/broadcast shows the winning lottery numbers
from the night before.

NEWS ANCHOR 1
At \$657 million dollars this is the
largest single winner jackpot in US
history.

NEWS ANCHOR 2
And the winning ticket bought right
here in the Sacramento area at
Vic's Supermarket of Folsom.

LIVING ROOM

Joseph stares at the TV dumbfounded.

JOSEPH
Holy...
(he pauses in disbelief)
We won. We won! Girls! Girls!

Joseph looks around in an excited yet confused daze. Jenny
runs in to see what all the commotion is.

Now both girls are next to him.

LUCY
(very excited)
What's it mean daddy?

Joseph looks down at Lucy. A very large and genuine smile
spreads across his face.

JOSEPH
It means you're definitely getting
the hot lunch today. (beat)
Everyday!!

JENNY
We won the lottery?

JOSEPH
We won the lottery!

JENNY
We won the lottery!

(CONTINUED)

Joseph grabs a hand of each girl, they each grab the free hand of the other creating a three person circle. They dance all together, in a clockwise motion.

JOSEPH, JENNY AND LUCY
We won! We won! We won! We won!

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Joseph parks in front of the school to drop the girls off. The mood amongst Joseph and the girls is the polar opposite of before.

The girls begin to exit the car.

JOSEPH
Now remember...

The girls stop and look at their dad.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Don't say anything to anyone!
Seriously.

He playfully, but with a sense of seriousness, puts his finger to his mouth as to say "shhhhh" but makes no sound.

The girls nod their heads.

Joseph points at Lucy with a straight finger, but with a big smile and playful demeanor.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Seriously.

LUCY
Okay daddy.

The girls close their doors and walk towards the school, a spring in their step.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Joseph almost bursts through the door looking for Kurt. Under his arm is a soft case briefcase.

He spots Kurt sitting alone at a small table reading the newspaper.

Joseph plops down.

(CONTINUED)

Kurt looks up, somewhat startled but then accepting of his friends presence.

KURT
You see this?
(he points to a lottery
related headline in the paper)
They say the winning ticket was
bought here in town. Can you
believe that?

Joseph has a silly large grin on his face.

JOSEPH
Yes Kurt. Yes I can.

Kurt gives him an odd scowl then goes back to the paper.

Keeping his over-the-top smile, Joseph reaches in to his soft case.

Joseph clears his throat in an exaggerated manner to get Kurt's attention.

Kurt looks up in confusion and intrigue.

Joseph brings out an envelope from his bag. He gently slides it in front of Kurt.

Kurt looks at him with a coy grin and reaches for the envelope.

KURT
And what's this?

Kurt begins to reach for the envelope.

Joseph's demeanor changes to a more serious expression.

JOSEPH
Wait. Are your hands clean?

Kurt pauses, looks at his hands, then reaches in to his backpack and pulls out a small hand sanitizer. He uses some.

After replacing the hand sanitizer, he shows his hands to Joseph.

KURT
Good?

Joseph's grin returns.

JOSEPH

Okay. But be careful.

Kurt opens the envelope with the requested care, now even more curious as to what his friend has brought him.

He pulls out the lottery ticket contained inside.

Increased confusion crosses Kurt's face. Then surprise and shock.

KURT

No.

Joseph nods affirmative with a silly smile.

KURT

No way.

JOSEPH

You've got the paper. Check it.

Kurt opens the paper and looks at the numbers reported. Then at the ticket, then back at the numbers, then back to the ticket.

Joseph looks on with excitement.

Kurt places the ticket back in the envelope and slides it back to Joseph.

Joseph pulls back the envelope.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Well, what do you think?

KURT

I think, that if I were you, I wouldn't be here, I'd be at the lottery commission.

JOSEPH

Yeah. Wait, what?

KURT

The lottery commission's office is only like 20 minutes from here. What are you doing here? You should be there getting your money!

JOSEPH

I was so excited, I didn't even think about how to actually collect. Thanks!

(CONTINUED)

Joseph prepares to leave.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Maybe I'll get one of those big
oversize checks.

KURT
(almost laughing)
At least you have your priorities
in line. Well, big money, I guess
you're buying my coffee today.

Kurt gives Joseph a big smile.

Joseph returns it.

Joseph's smile turns to worry in a flash.

KURT
What's wrong?

JOSEPH
(somewhat laughing to himself)
I don't have any cash.

EXT. CALIFORNIA STATE LOTTERY COMMISSION - DAY

The exterior sign announcing the State's lottery office
sparkles in the sunlight.

INT. CALIFORNIA STATE LOTTERY COMMISSION - DAY

LOBBY

Joseph walks in through the public entryway in to a nice
modern office building with no hints, besides a large set of
lottery promotional posters, that it is in fact the lottery
commission office.

He approaches the RECEPTIONIST (30's), a slender
African-American woman who looks to be a no-nonsense
multi-tasker extraordinaire.

RECEPTIONIST
May I help you sir?

JOSEPH
Hi.

Joseph shifts his soft case bag from under his right arm to
under his left so he can extend his right hand.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
My name is Joseph Felix.

RECEPTIONIST
Hello Mr. Felix.
(reluctant, she accepts the
handshake)
How may I help you?

JOSEPH
And you are?

The receptionist looks at him with tremendous doubt, as if she's about to be subject to a vacuum cleaner sales pitch.

Joseph reads her hesitancy.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, the reason I ask is, I
want to remember the people that I
met on one of the biggest and most
important days of my life.

RECEPTIONIST
(now smiling, somewhat charmed
by Joseph)
Angela, Angie.

Joseph extends his hand out again, she accepts.

JOSEPH
Pleasure to meet you Angie. I'm
here to turn in a ticket.

He lets go and smiles wide.

Her response now warm.

RECEPTIONIST
Well good for you.

She reaches for a clipboard that has a form already under its clasp.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Just fill out this form and we'll
have one of our people come talk to
you about payment.

She begins to hand him the clipboard, but stops for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

I forgot to ask, your ticket, it's for more than \$600 right, otherwise you don't have to fill out the form.

Joseph's face creates a smile larger than the Grand Canyon.

JOSEPH

Yes ma'am, it is.

CUT TO:

Joseph is sitting in a nice chair in the Lottery Commission office, his soft case in his hands.

A man (40's) in a nice off the rack suit approaches.

DAVE

Joseph Felix?

Joseph looks up and begins to stand.

JOSEPH

That's me.

Dave extends his hand.

DAVE

I'm Dave Galt with Winner Relations.

Joseph can't help but smile again.

DAVE

I understand you have our big winner?

JOSEPH

Yes sir.

Joseph stands there, facing Dave, an awkward silent moment passes.

DAVE

May I see it?

JOSEPH

Oh, of course!

Joseph reaches into his bag and pulls out the envelope and hands it to Dave.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

Alright, let's go validate your ticket and talk about what's next.

LOTTERY COMMISSION CONFERENCE ROOM

Joseph and Dave begin to sit at a large eight person conference table. The room is a typical conference room with a large TV/monitor on one end and more lottery posters decorating the walls.

As they sit, TANYA (40's) -- a no-nonsense woman professionally dressed and carrying a badge and gun on her waist -- walks in.

DAVE

Mr. Felix, this is Tanya Davis. She's one of the investigators here at the lottery commission that verifies winning tickets.

Joseph notices the badge and gun on her waist.

TANYA

(with simply a nod)
Nice to meet you Mr. Felix.

JOSEPH

(with an anxious laugh)
Wow, you guys don't mess around.

TANYA

People hurt people for \$20 Mr. Felix. Imagine what they'd do for millions.

JOSEPH

Good point. Well, I didn't hurt anyone to get my ticket I swear.

Joseph puts his hands up in fake surrender.

Tanya is not amused.

TANYA

Do you have the ticket with you.

DAVE

Right here.

Tanya puts on a pair of latex gloves to handle the ticket.

Dave hands Tanya the ticket.

(CONTINUED)

She takes the ticket and sets it down. She pulls out a piece of paper from inside her jacket and check the two against each other.

She then examines the ticket against the light in the room.

Tanya pulls out a black light flashlight from her pocket and scans the ticket.

Joseph begins to sweat.

When satisfied, she puts her flashlight and paper away.

Tanya nods at Dave.

TANYA

I feel comfortable proceeding.

Joseph smiles.

DAVE

Okay, thank you Tanya. Now, let's go talk in my office.

DAVE'S OFFICE

Joseph is sitting in a guest chair in Dave's modest office.

Dave sitting across from him is looking up information on the computer. He turns to face Joseph.

DAVE

How's 3pm Friday?

JOSEPH

Friday?

DAVE

Yes, day after tomorrow.

JOSEPH

How is it for what, exactly?

Dave has a warm smile.

DAVE

Your big press conference! To collect your check!

Joseph is confused.

JOSEPH

I don't get it now?

DAVE

Sorry, it takes a couple of days to process and get the sign-off from the treasury. Plus, we like to hold a big press conferences, make sure people watching know that lottery winners, like you, are real people, like them.

JOSEPH

(somewhat to himself)
Makes sense.

DAVE

So, 3pm on Friday?

INT. KURT'S OFFICE - DAY

Kurt is sitting at his desk, a lower level office set-up without much decoration. He is on the phone.

KURT

Yeah, I'll hold.

CUT TO:

Outside Kurt's office, TINA (30's) a beautiful woman dressed professionally, but to impress, walks down the hallway heading towards Kurt's office, but not to it.

CUT TO:

Kurt is still on hold.

KURT

Yes, great thanks.
(pauses)

Hey, Charlie, I know you're busy so I'll get right to it. You're the only guy I know who I can talk to about this. My buddy just won the lottery.

CUT TO:

Tina is just short of passing by Kurt's open office door when she stops dead in her tracks with intrigue.

INT. JOSEPH'S CAR - DAY

Joseph is driving, another Grand Canyon smile spreads across his face. The radio is on to a fast paced, exciting song. Joseph is happily singing along, happier than he's been in years. As the song comes to a conclusion, a RADIO DJ'S voice comes on.

RADIO DJ (O.S.)

That was (song title)by (artist).
So, as I'm sure you know, unless
you've been mining under a rock,
that the winner of the nation's
largest lottery jackpot in history
is from right here in Sacramento.
And apparently, not wasting their
time in claiming their money, the
lottery commission reports the
winner has already checked in with
them and turned in the winning
ticket. The lottery commission says
there will be a formal press
conference this Friday at 3pm. \$657
million dollars, after taxes and
penalties that adds up to... more
money than I'll ever see in my
life. Congrats to whomever won, and
hey, can I borrow a few bucks?

Joseph just keeps smiling.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Tina quietly lifts up the receiver on her desk phone and dials a number she is looking at on a slip of paper.

TINA

Hi. So, I hear you guys pay rewards
on story leads.

(she pauses to listen)

Well, I know who won the mega
millions jackpot.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Joseph parks his car. He gets out and walks towards the pick-up area for the kids. There are a dozen or so parents, the majority women, standing around, chit-chatting as they wait.

Joseph stands amongst the parents, not engaged with anyone.

(CONTINUED)

He overhears several random conversations about the lottery winning story.

PARENT 1

My husband says that whomever it was will pay more in taxes than they keep.

PARENT 2

That doesn't make sense. Even if it's true, who cares? I wouldn't know what to do with that much money.

PARENT 1

(smirking)

Oh, I think I'd find ways!

Joseph keys in on another conversation between a male PARENT 3 and a female PARENT 4.

PARENT 3

What's the first thing you'd do?

PARENT 4

File for a divorce.

Parent 3's face is confused.

PARENT 3

What? Why would you divorce Dan? I thought you guys were doing fine.

Parent 4 nods in agreement.

PARENT 4

Oh, we're doing fantastic! But I've seen the horror stories. Money like that changes people, and not for the better. Don't get me wrong, I wouldn't turn it down. I just figure, get divorced and we can go each marry a couple of twenty somethings who only want to please us for our money.

PARENT 3

You're horrible.

PARENT 4

You asked. Or, even better yet, stay single. Sometimes it's better to be alone.

(CONTINUED)

Parent 4 smiles, then notices that Joseph is standing close by. Horror crosses her face, her realization.

PARENT 4 (CONT'D)

Oh my God, I'm sorry Joe. I, I, we
were just joking about the
lottery...

Joseph smiles a polite smile and raises his hands in a "say no more" motion.

JOSEPH

Don't think twice about it.

The school bell rings, alerting parents and students alike the day is over. Joseph begins walking in towards the school.

INT. JOSEPH'S CAR - DAY

Joseph, Jenny and Lucy are in the car. No one talking.

Joseph looks at Jenny in the rear view mirror.

JOSEPH

So, how was school today? Any
better?

Jenny looks straight ahead for a moment, as if contemplating her words.

JENNY

Kind of.

JOSEPH

Only kind of?

JENNY

Well... I couldn't tell anyone
anything so it didn't change
anything.

JOSEPH

Yeah, but you knew. It doesn't
matter what anyone else knows, just
what you know.

LUCY

I had a great day daddy!

Joseph's eyes move over to Lucy.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

That's great honey! What made it
such a great day?

Lucy's face goes from a shining smile to a concentrated
look.

LUCY

I don't know.

Joseph smiles.

JOSEPH

That's okay honey, there doesn't
have to be a reason to have had a
good day so long as you feel you
did.

An awkward moment of silence passes. Joseph reaches down and
turns on the radio.

The end of a song plays, followed by the same RADIO DJ as
before.

RADIO DJ (O.S.)

Well, we have our winner folks,
Sacramento's very own Joseph Felix,
an Air Force veteran and widower
with two children is the winner of
the big \$657 million mega millions
jackpot.

Joseph nearly crashes the car as he hears his name. A wave
of panic crosses him.

JENNY

Son of a--

JOSEPH

Jenny!

LUCY

Does this mean we can tell our
friends now?

Joseph looks at Lucy in the rear view mirror. Her innocent
face staring back at him with a questioning innocence.

EXT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - DAY

They pull up at their house to discover several news station vans there. Joseph pulls in the driveway.

The crews from the stations bolt in to action attacking Joseph.

REPORTER 1
Joseph, what's the first thing
you're going to do with the money?

Before he can attempt an answer, the next reporter starts in.

REPORTER 2
Have you already received the
money?

REPORTER 1
Did you select the cash option or
payments?

REPORTER 3 (30's) female, dressed less casual than the others jumps in.

REPORTER 3
Do you have a girlfriend?

Joseph is taken aback by that question, finding it the most odd.

JOSEPH
Just trying to get my girls inside
so they can do their homework.
Thank you.

REPORTER 2
Where do you work?

Joseph is feeling overwhelmed and is trying to usher the girls to the door.

Lucy is upset by the strangers and Jenny's demeanor implies she doesn't even notice them.

He opens the door and herds the girls in.

REPORTER 1
Will you be quitting your job?

(CONTINUED)

REPORTER 3

Will you be giving any to charity?

For the first time, Joseph turns and looks at a specific reporter, Reporter 3. He points at her.

JOSEPH

Good idea.

INT. KURT'S OFFICE - DAY

MARCUS (50'S)-- a silver haired professionally dressed man -- walks into Kurt's office, he taps on the door to announce his presence.

Kurt looks up casually.

MARCUS

Afternoon.

KURT

Hey Marcus. What are you doing down here with the little people?

Marcus looks around, ignoring the comment.

MARCUS

I was just watching the news in my office.

Kurt hides his feelings about the executives all having cable in their offices.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

And I saw the story about your friend.

Kurt's demeanor changes.

KURT

What story? What friend?

MARCUS

Your friend, Felix is it?

KURT

What about him?

Marcus shows his confusion on his face.

(CONTINUED)

MARCUS

You didn't know he won the lotto?

Kurt sits back in his chair. He looks away, then back to Marcus.

KURT

I knew, I just didn't know anyone else did.

MARCUS

It's the lead story. Widowed father of two wins largest lotto jackpot in history. A veteran too. Seems like a solid guy. Maybe we should bring him in and talk to him about our expansion plans. Maybe he'd like to be a part of the team.

KURT

You're kidding.

MARCUS

No, a fellow like that. Seems like a great fit. You don't think so?

KURT

(obviously irritated)

I thought so when I tried to get you to hire him three months ago.

MARCUS

Oh, well, he wasn't the right fit then.

Kurt gives Marcus a stare that could melt lead, he forgets he is talking to his superior.

KURT

He was the same man then as he is now, the right man!

MARCUS

(beat)

So you'll talk to him?

INT. HAIR SALON - DAY

Claire is sitting in her usual seat at her hair salon. She is nearly in tears.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

I, I just want the best for those girls. I know he loves them, but I do too. I can provide for them better.

Her STYLIST makes eye contact in the salon mirror and nods in agreement as any good counselor does.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Obviously I was a good mother, he knows that, he loved the woman I raised for Pete's sake. I must have done something right.

The stylist continues to make eye contact in the salon mirror and nod.

Her stylist is working on her when she notices the tone and temperature of her client's body language change. Noticing where Claire's attention has shifted, she too looks at the flat panel TV hanging from the wall. Recognition.

STYLIST

Isn't that your son-in-law?

CLAIRE

That's the man who married my daughter.

Oblivious to her tone, her stylist continues.

STYLIST

Wow! That is exciting! I guess he and those girls of his will be set for life.

Claire cringes when her stylist says "girls of his." She responds almost disappointed, but catches herself from sounding too much so to avoid the judgment.

CLAIRE

I suppose.

The Stylist senses something amiss, and wisely decides to move on.

STYLIST

Did you see the Kings game last night?

INT. KURT'S OFFICE - DAY

Kurt walks at a brisk pace down the hallway of his office building. He approaches the elevator waiting area. Frantic, he dials out on his cellphone.

KURT
 (to his phone)
 Hey! I saw you got found out. I'm
 on my way over. I talked to my
 attorney...

The elevator door opens. A few people file out and Kurt begins to walk in.

KURT (CONT'D)
 He said whatever you do, don't...

The elevator doors shut and he loses his signal, as indicated by an audible alert.

Kurt pulls the phone from his ear and looks at the screen which verifies the alert to mean what he thought.

KURT (CONT'D)
 Damn it.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - DAY

LIVING ROOM

Joseph sits on his very modest couch, watching TV. The 5 o'clock news comes on with his winning the lead story.

ON TV SET

NEWS ANCHOR 1
 The winner of the country's biggest
 lottery jackpot has been
 discovered.

NEWS ANCHOR 2
 In a channel 31 exclusive...

LIVING ROOM

Joseph looks at the TV with confusion.

JOSEPH
 (to himself)
 Exclusive? There are five trucks
 outside.

ON TV SET

(CONTINUED)

NEWS ANCHOR 2

Widowed father of two who lives in a modest home and we understand is unemployed.

NEWS ANCHOR 1

Well, that's a wonderful story, and good for him.

NEWS ANCHOR 2

Indeed.

LIVING ROOM

Joseph gets up from his couch, shaking his head at the nonsense.

KITCHEN

Joseph opens the fridge and notices its scarce contents. He smiles to himself knowing this is not for long. He pulls out a milk container, barely a sip in it, opens the container and swigs it.

His cell phone rings on the counter.

Joseph approaches it with caution, he stares at the caller ID. It reads "Uncle Fred".

Joseph is suspicious but curious and decides to answer.

JOSEPH

Hello?

EXT. FRED'S CAR LOT - DAY

Joseph parks in a spot at his Uncle Fred's car lot. He exits his car at a normal pace.

Fred rushes out, as fast as his ill-maintained body will allow, to greet Joseph.

FRED

Joey! My boy how are you doing?

(he grabs Joseph in almost bear hug fashion)

Silly question, you're doing great, and I couldn't be happier for you, I really couldn't!!

Joseph is skeptical.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH
Thanks Fred.

Fred puts his arm around Joseph to start to guide him.

FRED
Come on in to my office, I wanna
show you something.

INT. FRED'S CAR LOT - DAY

Fred escorts Joseph in to his small office. He shows Joseph
to one of his thrift store bought guest chairs.

FRED
Have a seat.

Joseph does.

FRED (CONT'D)
I have an idea. You're famous now,
and I think people are interested
in you, I mean, you are all over
the news. Have you seen some of the
reports? People love you! I mean, a
widowed veteran with two starving
kids wins the lottery, it's
classic!

Joseph is taken aback by this statement.

FRED (CONT'D)
I mean, that's how those
over-sensationalizing jerks are
playing it.

Joseph just stares at Fred, still not feeling any sense of
what the man wants to talk about.

FRED (CONT'D)
So I was thinking, maybe we have a
big promotion where you, the
country's newest multi-millionaire,
gives a car away, you know, for
charity.

JOSEPH
Charity?

FRED
Yeah, we sell raffle tickets or
something, and all the money goes
to charity.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

So, you're going to sell raffle tickets to people for a chance to win a free car.

FRED

Right!

JOSEPH

And you want me to, what, sell raffle tickets for the charity?

FRED

If you want, but I figured, you're going to need to write off some contributions, so perhaps, you buy the car from me, or cars, and we use those for the raffle.

JOSEPH

So you want me to buy a car...

FRED

(interrupting)

Or cars.

Joseph continues as if he hadn't heard Fred's attempt at a correction.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

...that you could then have a big promotion to sell raffle tickets for?

FRED

For charity.

JOSEPH

But you're not giving anything from your pocket to charity, in fact, you get a lot of people on your lot and you get all of their contact information to try to sell all the ones who don't win a car.

FRED

It is a business. But remember, buying the car and selling the raffle tickets is all...

JOSEPH

(interrupting and looking deadpan at Fred)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH (cont'd)
For charity.

Joseph begins to stand.

FRED
You don't get the money for a few
days right?

JOSEPH
Friday at 3pm.

FRED
Well, I'll front the costs now and
we can do it tomorrow. In fact,
I'll let you borrow one of my best
cars now too, you know, so you have
better and more reliable
transportation for those girls of
yours.

Joseph is wary.

FRED (CONT'D)
And, if you decide you want to buy
it after, so be it.

Joseph gives a "oh, there it is" reaction.

Fred ignores this and picks up an envelope off his desk.

FRED (CONT'D)
And, to help you out until then,
here's a few thousand dollars
spending money, simple loan to get
you through.

Joseph looks at the money in surprise.

JOSEPH
I thought you didn't have ten
dollars to spare?

FRED
This is company money, an
investment. I'll need some interest
paid on it of course.

JOSEPH
Of course.

Fred smiles, Joseph doesn't return it.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Joseph pulls up to the student pick-up area in a nice newer model used car.

Jenny and Lucy don't see that it's their dad at first, being he's driving a new car and all, once they do, they are ecstatic.

Jenny's least liked classmate Katie walks up with the boy they both like, ANDY (13), a skinny built average looking young man.

ANDY

Wow! Nice car!

JENNY

(as if it were her car and she wasn't seeing it for the first time)

Oh, yeah, thanks! Bye Andy!

Jenny smiles a sweet smile at Andy, then a devilish look to Katie.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Bye Katie.

Jenny and Lucy run to the new car.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

HALLWAY

Joseph walks Jenny to her room. Jenny sits on her bed and Joseph begins a quick retreat, not wanting to upset or push her.

JOSEPH

Good night.

He starts to walk away.

JENNY

Dad?

JOSEPH

Yeah?

JENNY

I'm sorry.

Tears start to form in her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

Joseph hurries back to her and sits next to her on her bed.

JOSEPH

For what?

JENNY

I, know you were trying and I didn't make things any easier. I, just...

JOSEPH

I know, it's okay.

JENNY

No, it really isn't. You gave up everything to take care of Mom and now us and I... I'm just sorry.

Joseph squeezes her tight.

JOSEPH

It's going to be okay. Money or not, I love you and want the best for you.

JENNY

Can I tell you something?

JOSEPH

Of course.

JENNY

I was really mad at you for buying that lottery ticket.

Joseph pulls away, a little surprised.

JOSEPH

You're mad we won the lottery?

JENNY

No, I was mad when you bought the ticket instead of buying us lunch stuff.

JOSEPH

Oh, yeah.

JENNY

It was kind of dumb.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

No..

Joseph turns his face forward from looking at her, takes in a deep breath, then lets it out and turns back to her with a shameful smile.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

... it was really dumb.

JENNY

So, is that what they mean by "dumb luck"?

Joseph starts to laugh.

JOSEPH

I think they'll have to put a picture of me in the dictionary now.

LUCY'S ROOM

Joseph enters behind Lucy who is kneeling at her bed, praying and unaware of her dad's entry.

LUCY

...and bless Daddy's friend Kurt, Aunt Annie, and of course, keep Mommy happy. I know you see her often, please tell her "hi." Okay, Amen.

JOSEPH

That was very nice honey.

Lucy gets up from her spot and begins to get in bed, as if she didn't hear or notice her dad.

Joseph walks to her side and helps tuck her in.

LUCY

Daddy?

JOSEPH

Yes?

LUCY

Did we win the lottery because mommy died?

JOSEPH

(surprised)

What do you mean honey?

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

Did God let us win the lottery
because he took mommy?

Joseph is speechless for a moment, then finds his words.

JOSEPH

God didn't take Mommy honey. Things
just happen.

LUCY

But I thought God created all.

JOSEPH

It doesn't mean he takes it all
away, some things just are. We
don't know why, we may never know
why. Hundreds of years from now
things that happen today, even bad
things, may lead to a greater good.
Does that make sense?

Lucy shrugs.

LUCY

I guess so.

JOSEPH

I miss your mom too, everyday, but
we can't blame anyone, it just is.

LUCY

Okay. So why did we win the
lottery?

JOSEPH

It just is.
(he thinks for a beat)
Just dumb luck.

He smiles at her. She smiles back.

HALLWAY

Joseph walks away from Lucy's room towards the living room.
As he does so he notices the pictures on the walls. Pictures
of happier times. The phone is ringing in the background.

LIVING ROOM

Joseph sits in his worn down recliner, the home phone begins
to ring again, then his cellphone. He simply looks at them.

JOSEPH'S BEDROOM

Joseph sits at the edge of the bed, overwhelmed.

(CONTINUED)

He begins pointing at random furniture, all of it worn, mis-matched, and unattractive.

JOSEPH

I'm replacing you, and you, and
you...

As if on cue, and knowing of its demise, the bed breaks, sending Joseph to the floor. He starts off slow, but ends in a hysterical laughing fit before finally calming himself down.

He turns, then stares at the ceiling. He casually puts his hands behind his head ala Matthew Broderick in the "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" poster.

JOSEPH

Perfect.

INT. MILITARY BUNK ROOM AFGHANISTAN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Back to a four years younger Sergeant Felix. He is calm as he follows behind a hurried and panicked corporal.

The young corporal turns back and looks at Joseph.

CORPORAL

Sergeant, the drone!

JOSEPH

I'm coming.

INT. FLIGHT CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The Corporal bursts through the doorway leading in to the mobile drone control room. The room looks like a high-end video arcade, but replacing coin dropping gamers are anxious military pilots.

A LIEUTENANT COLONEL (40's)-- burly and with a high level of authority coming purely from his command presence -- turns in response to the Corporal bursting through. The Corporal looks around a moment and makes eye contact with the Lt. Colonel.

CORPORAL

Sir. Sergeant Felix sir.

LT. COLONEL GREY

Sergeant, we have a problem.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH
(confused)
Sir, where's Major Linx?

LT. COLONEL GREY
Not your concern. Your concern is
stopping this attack.

Joseph's face doesn't hide his increased confusion.

JOSEPH
Attack sir?

LT. COLONEL GREY
One of the drones has been
mistakenly assigned a missile
launch, and it won't accept orders
to stop.

CUT TO:

A large screen in the flight control room shows a countdown timer. The timer reads "00:03:23:45" and is dropping every mili-second.

LT. COLONEL GREY (CONT'D)
If we don't stop the launch
instructions, it will fire a
missile on a civilian heavy target
killing hundreds. Not to mention
the international outcry.

Colonel Grey stares at Joseph in an attempt to transfer the weight of the world with his eyes.

LT. COLONEL GREY (CONT'D)
Fix it.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

BEDROOM

Joseph wakes up startled and covered in sweat. He looks around to observe his surroundings and ensure the dream was only that.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Joseph pulls in the school drop-off area with the girls. There are about twice as many people there as normal, and Joseph realizes they are there to see him.

(CONTINUED)

One or two of the the single Moms appear to have tighter and lower cut tops than one would expect to see at school drop-off, and showing a bit more skin on their legs as well.

Jenny and Lucy exit the car.

JENNY AND LUCY

Love you, bye.

PARENT 1 walks over to Joseph's side of the car, blocking his attempt to exit by crossing in front of him.

PARENT 1

Joey!

Joseph's eyebrows sink in to his eyes as he internalizes a "Joey? What the..."

PARENT 1 (CONT'D)

We missed you at PTA last night!
You know, I may be a happily
married woman, well, married woman
at least...

(she winks a joking wink)

But there are plenty of nice single
Moms that attend, you really should
come by next time.

JOSEPH

Umm.... okay...

PARENT 1

So, we were talking and as the head
of the gymnasium fund raising
committee, you know I'm the
chair...

Joseph nods as if he has a clue about what she's saying.

PARENT 1 (CONT'D)

And as the chair, it's my job to
ensure we ask all our parents what
they're able to commit to helping
the gymnasium get the repairs it
needs. Your girls play volleyball
don't they?

Joseph nods.

PARENT 1 (CONT'D)

So I know you'll want to help out,
especially now that, well, you
know.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

Umm... okay... I'll let you know.

Joseph puts the car, with some degree of difficulty and embarrassment of his new car handling ability, in to drive and pulls away.

Parent 1 is surprised, but smiles as Joseph does this.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Joseph sits at one of the tables.

He is overcome by that "someone is watching you feeling" and begins to look around. Not someone, everyone.

An attractive female PATRON in her mid-twenties and dressed for an average day of turning heads, walks up to Joseph with a piece of paper and a Sharpie in her hand.

PATRON

Joseph Felix right?

JOSEPH

(with a slight lump in his throat)

Yes.

She extends the paper and pen.

PATRON

Can I have your autograph? And maybe a picture?

JOSEPH

Um, sure, I guess.

Joseph takes the pen and begins to sign the paper. As he does so the Patron takes out her cellphone and prepares it for a selfie picture with Joseph.

She gets in very close to Joseph to take the picture.

PATRON

Thanks!

JOSEPH

No problem.

She begins to walk away, then turns and hands him another slip of paper.

(CONTINUED)

PATRON

And in appreciation, here's my number.

She hands it to him, then winks and walks away.

Just as Patron winks, Kurt walks in behind Joseph, observing the scene.

KURT

What - was - that?

Joseph looks to Kurt, still somewhat slack jawed, then he puts on a false bravado and gives a small dismissive wave in the gals general direction.

JOSEPH

That? Nah-thing. Just a fan.

Kurt joins him at the table.

KURT

Well, anyhow, how are you?

JOSEPH

I am every bit of amazing. I went from about sixty-seven friends on Facebook to five-thousand.

KURT

I bet.

JOSEPH

And a few hundred new connections on LinkedIn too. Not that I need to network for a job anymore. Overall, things are pretty damn good.

KURT

Good. So, when do you get...
(he leans in and almost
whispers)
... the check.

JOSEPH

Tomorrow.

KURT

I talked to a buddy of mine.

JOSEPH

Right, you mentioned some advice?

Kurt sighs.

(CONTINUED)

KURT

Yeah, it was don't talk to the media and try to avoid them getting your story ahead of the press conference.

JOSEPH

That cat's out.

KURT

And to not let any family, you don't live with, know.

Joseph just gives Kurt an "oh well" expression.

KURT (CONT'D)

Guess you'll have to go to the presser already a celebrity.

Kurt makes a hand gesture towards the overall presence of on-lookers.

Joseph sits upright as if a brilliant idea just hit him.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Want to come with me?

KURT

Ummm...

JOSEPH

Will you please come with me to the press conference?

KURT

Well, I guess I could...

JOSEPH

Great!

They sit in silence for a moment.

KURT

Well? You going to at least get me a coffee?

INT. SLEEP TRAIN FURNITURE STORE - DAY

Three sales clerks, all in their late twenties, all dressed in white button-down shirts, dark ties, and dark slacks, stand in a corner discussing the pop culture topics of the day.

(CONTINUED)

One of the clerks looks up and notices Joseph who has just walked in. The clerk then looks back at his colleagues. It dawns on him who he just saw and he does a double-take to look back at Joseph. First to verify he saw who he thought, then to ensure he got the jump on his co-workers.

He is quick to leave the group and approach Joseph. He almost startles Joseph as he gets close to him.

DANNY

Hello and welcome to Sleep Train,
I'm Danny

(Danny extends his hand,
nearly forcing a handshake)
and my goal today is to make sure
right now, in this moment, you are
the most tired you ever will be
again from lack of a good nights
sleep.

Joseph looks back at Danny as if he just spoke a foreign language.

JOSEPH

Okay... Well, I need a new bed.

DANNY

(forcefully)
No sir, you need a new experience.

Danny puts his arm around Joseph and begins to herd him to another side of the store.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Let me show you something.

JUMP TO:

Danny is sitting with Joseph at a nice desk. Danny slides over a purchase agreement.

DANNY

And with our great "60 days same as
cash" program, no money down is
needed today.

JOSEPH

(confused)
Don't you need to run my credit? I
came in a few months ago and you
guys said my score was too low.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Oh, no worries Mr. Felix, you're credit is good with us now.

Joseph shares an "I bet" expression.

Danny just smiles like he's hiding a fart.

Joseph relaxes his shoulders.

JOSEPH

It's only money.

He signs the form and slides it over to Danny.

DANNY

(parroting)

It's only money.

JOSEPH

So, this will be at my place by...

Danny is looking at the paperwork.

DANNY

Five o'clock tonight.

He looks up.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Now, you have two daughters, right?

Danny turns and looks to some fancy kids beds.

A large shit eating grin crosses Danny's face.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Joseph drives slow through the aisles of plots.

He walks towards his wife's grave site, this time with a large and beautiful bouquet of long stem roses.

He sets the roses down, then looks to the headstone.

JOSEPH

(to he headstone)

Picking up a check for several hundred million dollars tomorrow. Crazy right? Actually, I don't even know how much it's for. But, I know now I can provide for the girls.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH (cont'd)

Funny thing is, buying that ticket was probably the dumbest thing I've ever done, I mean, I chose a piece of paper with a dream over feeding our girls. But it worked out, kind of. It really is amazing how much things change when you have money. I'm feeling lost, but I know one thing. I wish you were here to enjoy this with me. I miss you.

He rises and turns to head back to his car. Standing there is ANNIE (late 20's), a petite brunette bundled up in higher-end outerwear, her arms crossed, her face and body language fighting to stay upset.

She looks from Joseph to the headstone.

ANNIE

I always loved her.

Joseph is shocked at her presence. Once the shock passes he replies.

JOSEPH

And she loved you.

Silence. Awkward silence.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I'll pay you back the money as soon as I get the check.

ANNIE

I know you will, and I know you would have before now if you could have.

(beat)

That's not why I'm here.

JOSEPH

Why are you here?

ANNIE

I didn't want to do this at your house with all the media people hovering around.

JOSEPH

(bitter)

This? Now that I can pay you back you want interest, or an investment loan, or what?

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE

(sighs in frustration)

I want to see my nieces. I love and miss them. I haven't forgotten how we left things last year, but I'm willing to forgive.

JOSEPH

Convenient timing.

ANNIE

Maybe. But I don't need help Joseph, I have a good job and a home. What I'm missing is family. I think you're more upset about the money you borrowed than I am. I just want my family. I miss my big brother, I miss my nieces.

She tilts her head towards the headstone.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

And I miss her too.

Joseph starts looking around anxious, not wanting to make eye contact for fear of tears.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(uncrossing her arms)

Since Mom passed, and we had our falling out, I've been alone. No brother, no nieces, no sister-in-law, no uncle.

She kind of shrugs with a coy smirk.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

That one I'm okay with.

Joseph smiles.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I figure, if you're willing to finally forgive yourself, I can forgive you, and we can be a family again.

Joseph looks at the ground, then up to her.

JOSEPH

Dinner plans?

INT. KURT'S OFFICE - DAY

Kurt sits at his desk, Marcus taps on his already open door and enters. Kurt looks up.

MARCUS

I understand you want to take tomorrow off to join your friend at the lottery commission.

KURT

Is that going to be a problem?

MARCUS

No. Not at all. Just, wanted to remind you about the opportunities we discussed.

KURT

(with irritation)
Yup. Understood.

MARCUS

Atta boy.

Marcus leaves, very soon after, Tina enters. She is wearing a barely appropriate for work blouse that has two more buttons undone than could be acceptable for the workplace.

TINA

Hey Kurt.

She walks to his desk and bends over slightly.

TINA (CONT'D)

How are you, how are things with your friend. Must be crazy right?

KURT

I have a lot of work Tina.

TINA

Yeah, I heard you're going to be gone tomorrow. To the lottery commission with your friend?

Kurt shakes his head in disgust on how fast things travel.

KURT

Yup, that's why I have a lot of work to do.

(CONTINUED)

TINA

Well, I don't want to keep you...

She begins to back away, then leans back in, even further than before. She gently caresses Kurt's chin, pulling him towards her.

TINA

But know, I'm here for you.

She lets go then turns and walks away, leaving Kurt a little irritated, but with his mouth still open.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - DAY

KITCHEN

Jenny opens the cabinets. She yells to the other room.

JENNY

We're rich now, right dad?

LIVING ROOM

JOSEPH

You could say that, but don't brag.

KITCHEN

JENNY

Oh, I'm not bragging. I'm just wondering when rich people go grocery shopping?

Joseph walks in behind her and sees what she sees, an empty cabinet.

Joseph puts his hands on her shoulders.

JOSEPH

Now.

EXT. SAM'S CLUB - DAY

Joseph, Jenny and Lucy walk towards the entrance of Sam's Club.

INT. SAM'S CLUB - DAY

Joseph grabs a cart.

LUCY
Can I push it?

JOSEPH
Sure. Now, first thing, we need
food for dinner. We have a special
guest.

LUCY
Who?

JOSEPH
Your Aunt.

JENNY
(excited)
Annie?

JOSEPH
Yup.

JENNY
Cool.

LUCY
Yay!

Joseph and the girls start to push the cart.

JOSEPH
Remember, just the essentials.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - SHOPPING AT SAM'S CLUB

-- Joseph and the girls are shopping with little regard for
what they are putting in the carts.

-- They select things that they would never have before, and
in very large quantities.

-- They exit the store, Lucy pushing a cart as full as she
could, followed by Joseph pushing a full cart, followed by
Jenny, followed by several full carts being pushed by staff.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DINING ROOM

Joseph and the girls are setting their dining table. A KNOCK at the door. The girls rush to it.

LIVING ROOM

The door is opened by Jenny to reveal Annie.

JENNY

Aunt Annie!

Both girls rush to give her hugs.

ANNIE

Well hello girls. Nice to see you too.

Joseph approaches.

JOSEPH

Hey sis, come on in.

DINING ROOM

Joseph, Jenny, Lucy and Annie are all sitting at dinner. There is a large spread of food on the table, as if it were Thanksgiving.

ANNIE

Quite the spread here, did you expect me to bring someone, or, several people?

JOSEPH

It's just nice to, to have company.

ANNIE

So, besides food, what are your big plans.

LUCY

We got new beds! Wanna see?

ANNIE

Yes, after dinner.

JOSEPH

Well, Uncle Fred came to me with a proposal to buy some cars from him to do a charity raffle.

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE
I'm sure he did.

JOSEPH
But it got me thinking.

ANNIE
Uh huh...

JOSEPH
I'm going to put my money to work
for charity.

ANNIE
Like what kind?

JOSEPH
One that helps veterans find jobs
and job training. I connected with
a guy on LinkedIn that runs a group
called VetHire, sounds like a good
place to start.

Annie is taken aback for a moment. She then reaches out and
covers Joseph's hands with hers.

ANNIE
I love it.

Joseph gives a sincere smile that turn to sarcastic.

JOSEPH
The rest will go in the bank of
course.

ANNIE
You sure? You know the FDIC only
insures \$100,000, what do you do
with the rest?

Joseph is taken aback.

JOSEPH
Now that is a problem I never
thought I'd have to worry about!

EXT. FRED'S CAR LOT - DAY

Balloons and promotions material everywhere, including signs
that read "Help a Vet, Win a car!"

(CONTINUED)

There is a large crowd around a stage, almost as if a political rally, except the stage has a car behind the podium and a large raffle ticket spin barrel is sitting of to the side.

Fred walks up to behind the podium.

FRED
Good afternoon winners!

The crowd cheers.

FRED (CONT'D)
Who's here to win a car?

More cheers.

FRED (CONT'D)
And, of course, to support a good cause, job training for our local veterans, of which my lottery winning nephew is -- a proud veteran.
(getting more serious)
And we can never do enough to help our veterans in need, whenever and whatever we can.

Joseph absorbs the irony.

FRED (CONT'D)
(getting loud again)
Am I right?

Crowd cheers again.

FRED (CONT'D)
And some even better news, we're not giving away one car, or two, we're giving away three!!

The crowd goes crazy!

FRED
Now, that means, you have three times as many chances at a new car, so you need to buy three times as many tickets! Another round of sales starts now! Let's help those vets!!

Joseph is taken aback at this irony. He shakes his head and laughs to himself a slight chuckle.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES GRANT (50's), a distinguished man wearing higher end business casual attire, and whose features show he's been successful through many of life's tests, walks up to Joseph.

CHARLES GRANT
Mr. Felix?

Joseph turns to him. The man has his hand extended.

CHARLES GRANT (CONT'D)
I'm Charles Grant from the VetHire Organization, we spoke via email.

Joseph's expression goes from wary to excited. He shakes the mans extended hand with enthusiasm.

JOSEPH
Yes! Nice to meet you. Thank you for coming out.

CHARLES GRANT
My pleasure. We really appreciate what you're doing here, and thank you for selecting us as the beneficiary.

JOSEPH
I read your profile, you're exactly who I thought should benefit. You have no idea how happy I am to do it. It's a cause close to my heart.

CHARLES GRANT
That's what I understand. Wish you and I had met before, I think I would have been able to help.

JOSEPH
Well, I appreciate that, but I'm happy I get to be the one helping you and your fantastic organization.

CHARLES GRANT
I'm glad you found out about us.

JOSEPH
Like you said, wish I had sooner. But, we're here now and everything happens for a reason.

CHARLES GRANT

Indeed.

Joseph and the Man stand side-by-side watching as Fred continues to work the crowd.

FRED

Okay, let's bring him up, my nephew, the man of the hour, retired Army Sergeant Joseph Felix!!!!

Joseph walks up and stands behind Fred.

Annie is in the front side of the crowd, she looks at Joseph standing behind Fred as if to say "what the heck?". He smiles at her and shrugs.

JOSEPH

(mouthing)

It's for charity.

MONTAGE - INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

JOSEPH'S BEDROOM

-- Joseph lies in his bed, staring at the ceiling. The alarm clock reads 11:54pm

-- Joseph stirs in his bed, staring at the ceiling. The alarm clock reads 1:12am

-- Joseph lies in his bed, staring at the ceiling. The alarm clock reads 3:54am

-- Joseph is wide awake, haven't gotten any sleep. The alarm clock now reads 6:29 am, it turns to 6:30am and the noise starts.

-- Joseph turns to the alarm, turns it off, then returns to looking up. Another grand canyon smile crosses his face.

EXT. KURT'S OFFICE - DAY

A limo is sitting in front of the building, Joseph is standing in front of it.

His shoulders shrug as Kurt approaches.

KURT

Really?

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH
(hands in a "don't blame me"
position)
Wasn't my idea. Uncle got it for
me.

KURT
Of course he did. Well,
millionaires ride in style, right?

JOSEPH
Right.

EXT. CALIFORNIA STATE LOTTERY COMMISSION - DAY

They pass a bank sign that shows the current time as 2:55pm.

The exterior sign announcing the State's lottery office
sparkles in the sunlight.

The limo Joseph and Kurt are in pulls in front of the
lottery commission office. A large crowd of people await
Joseph's arrival, making it look like a red carpet premiere.
Complete with both news reporters and regular citizens
alike. Some are dressed to stand out and get Joseph's
attention.

The limo driver comes around and opens the door. Kurt steps
out first and shakes his head in amazement as he turns to
watch Joseph get out.

Multiple women are trying to get Joseph's attention, YELLING
OUT marriage proposals. Even a GUY DRESSED IN A TUXEDO
T-SHIRT does the same.

Joseph and Kurt walk towards the entrance, city police and
building security are struggling to keep people from getting
to them.

A REPORTER FROM THE CROWD works his way close to Joseph.

REPORTER FROM THE CROWD
Mr. Felix, everyone wants to know,
what are some of your big plans to
do with the money?

JOSEPH
Well, I'm still a bit in shock, but
the most important thing is to take
care of my girls. Buy them a nice
home, college funds, the works.
(beat) I'd also like to find ways
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH (cont'd)
to support my fellow veterans,
especially others who are forced to
come home to take care of sick
loved ones.

Kurt pulls Joseph away from the reporter and towards the front door of the lottery commission. Security is forced to re-double their effort as the crowd realizes Joseph is getting away.

As he's about to enter, Joseph waves to the crowd of on-lookers, similar to Nixon's farewell wave.

INT. CALIFORNIA STATE LOTTERY COMMISSION - DAY

LOBBY

Angie the Receptionist stands and greets Joseph and Kurt.

RECEPTIONIST
Well hello Mr. Felix.

JOSEPH
Hello Angie!

RECEPTIONIST
You remembered my name.

JOSEPH
I told you I'd remember, you're
part of one of the best things to
ever happen to me.

RECEPTIONIST
If winning over six-hundred million
dollars is just one of the best
things, I'd love to know what the
best day was.

JOSEPH
(without hesitation)
Easy, the day I met my wife.
Seconded by the days I met my
daughters and third, the day I
married my wife.

She smiles an "aren't you sweet" smile.

Dave walks out from behind a door and walks towards the reception desk.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

Mr. Felix, good to see you again.

Dave extends his hand as he approaches Joseph.

JOSEPH

It's very good to be seen.

(turns towards Kurt)

This is my friend Kurt.

Dave extends his hand to Kurt, who accepts it.

DAVE

Nice to meet you.

KURT

Pleasure.

Dave gets up close to Joseph.

DAVE

Before we go in to the press conference, let's go talk about what to expect for a moment.

JOSEPH

Okay.

Joseph and Kurt both begin to walk with Dave.

DAVE

Just us if you don't mind.

Kurt puts his hands up in a friendly "no problem" gesture.

KURT

No problem, just come get me when you're ready.

CONFERENCE ROOM

Joseph and Dave begin to sit at the same conference room table they did just a few days before.

Dave looks to Joseph and brings his hands together, turning very serious.

DAVE

Joe, may I call you Joe?

Joseph nods his head.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE (CONT'D)
Joe, we have a problem.

Joseph's face shows concern.

At that moment the door opens and Tanya walks in, a file in her hands. She sits down next to Dave, not a word spoken or glance exchanged.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Joe, we need to show you something.

Dave turns towards the large TV/computer monitor in the room, he turns it on and starts to play a video.

Video of Joseph and his daughters buying the ticket appears and plays the sequence of the purchase.

JOSEPH
(confused)
What's the problem? You have video of me buying the ticket.

DAVE
That video is of your daughter buying the ticket.

Joseph is confused and growing anxious.

TANYA
Your daughter is who actually put the money in the machine. Technically Mr. Felix, she bought the ticket, which is illegal as she is a minor.

Joseph is flabbergasted.

DAVE
It's underage gambling.

TANYA
Don't worry. We've decided not to press charges.

DAVE
But, you won't be able to collect on this ticket since it was illegally purchased.
(he pauses)
I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

PRESS ROOM

The press room at the lottery commission office would remind anyone who saw it of the White House press room, but with lottery posters everywhere. The podium is set for the big announcement. Camera crews from around the country are in the back, reporters with their hand-held mics up-front.

Dave approaches the podium. After he and the crowd settle, he begins to speak.

DAVE

I have an announcement regarding the winning ticket of the most recent Mega Millions lottery jackpot.

Camera flashes go off.

CUT TO:

HALLWAY

Joseph walks fast towards Kurt. Kurt stands, confused.

KURT

What's up?

JOSEPH

We need to go, just, come on.

EXT. CALIFORNIA STATE LOTTERY COMMISSION - DAY

Joseph and Kurt are rushing to the limo. The crowd is as crazy as it was when he entered, unaware of the news Joseph just received.

JUMP TO:

INT. CALIFORNIA STATE LOTTERY COMMISSION - DAY

PRESS ROOM

Dave continues his comments at the podium.

DAVE

Upon an in-depth review by our agents, it has been determined the winning ticket was purchased illegally.

JUMP TO:

INT. LIMO - DAY

Joseph and Kurt get in and ask the driver to leave. The crowd starts to surround the limo like it contained departing rock stars.

The driver gets the car moving and they speed off.

INT. CALIFORNIA STATE LOTTERY COMMISSION - DAY

PRESS ROOM

DAVE

Though we don't believe there was any intention to be deceitful on the part of the claimant and will not be perusing criminal prosecution, we are forced to however, deny any payout.

MONTAGE - NEWS CASTS

Video reports regarding the dramatic turn of events as it relates to the ticket being invalid and the lotto now rolling over.

-- Newscaster commentary.

-- Man on the street interviews.

-- Paparazzi questioning Joseph outside of his home.

-- People weigh-in commentary: BARISTA sporting a direct to camera "hi Mom" look "he's always so quiet"; the GUY DRESSED IN A TUXEDO T-SHIRT "he seemed very distant"; the PATRON from the coffee shop selfie "he's cute, sorry to hear he's not rich anymore too"

INT. CLAIRE'S HOME - DAY

CLAIRE'S BEDROOM

Claire turns off the TV, having just watched the last newscast. She is sits on the edge of her nicely made bed, in her well furnished bedroom in her above average home. Without changing her stoic facial expression she rises from the edge of her bed, leaving the remote control behind, and goes to the living room.

CLAIRE'S LIVING ROOM

Claire picks up her purse, sunglasses, keys, all in a calm and methodical order, and proceeds to leave her home.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - DAY

LIVING ROOM

It's the day after the lottery press conference. The media sit in front of his home like vultures waiting for the last breath, he now feels like a prisoner.

Joseph peeks through his living room blinds, observing the media encampment that is in-front of his home.

He backs away from blinds, disgusted with the situation. He turns to look at his home, he steps in one direction, then another, further realizing he is in-fact trapped.

Joseph walks towards his couch when he hears a KNOCK at the door. He stops but doesn't move.

CPS INVESTIGATOR (O.S.)
Mr. Felix, County Child Protective
Services.

Another KNOCK.

Joseph begins towards the door.

CPS INVESTIGATOR (O.S.)
CPS Mr. Felix, I just need to ask
you a few questions.

Joseph peers through the blinds and sees the CPS INVESTIGATOR (40's), an all business woman with neither a chummy nor mean demeanor, standing at the door.

Joseph opens the door.

JOSEPH
Yes?

The CPS Investigator looks behind her noticing the camera crews and their extreme interest in her visit.

CPS INVESTIGATOR
May I come in please?

Joseph backs away and motions for her to come in.

POV: A camera watches Joseph as he lets her in and looks out, a photo is taken.

Back inside the CPS Investigator hands Joseph her card.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

What's this regarding? It's Saturday.

CPS INVESTIGATOR

There's been a complaint from a blood relative concerning the safety of your children. Even on a Saturday, we visit, 24/7 if needed.

JOSEPH

My girls are fine.

CPS INVESTIGATOR

Are they here?

JOSEPH

No, they're with my sister.

The CPS Investigator notes this on her clipboard.

CPS INVESTIGATOR

May I see the home?

Joseph is reluctant at first, but decides he has nothing to hide.

JOSEPH

Of course.

As the CPS Investigator walks towards the kitchen, Joseph peers out his blinds.

POV: A camera catches Joseph's peer. A photo is taken.

KITCHEN

The investigator is looking around. Joseph observes this and looks outside, seeing the media piled up, he starts to show signs of being overwhelmed.

CPS INVESTIGATOR

Are you okay Mr. Felix?

Joseph just stares at her. He regains his composure and stands straight.

JOSEPH

I'm... I'm just a little overwhelmed.

The CPS Investigator goes back to her clipboard. She clicks her pen to the extended position and starts to scribble a note.

(CONTINUED)

CPS INVESTIGATOR

Uh huh.

Joseph's anxiety escalates even further.

LIVING ROOM

Joseph walks the CPS Investigator to the door. As they approach, the CPS Investigator turns to Joseph.

CPS INVESTIGATOR

You have my card if you have any questions. Otherwise, we'll be in touch. Good day Mr. Felix.

MONTAGE - A COUPLE WEEKS PASS

-- Paparazzi style attempts to talk to Joseph at his home and his kids school.

-- More man on the street interviews about the drama.

-- Joseph sells his car.

-- Joseph walks girls to and from school. Reporters try and talk to him.

-- Joseph and the girls start to pack up the house.

INT. LAWYERS OFFICE - DAY

Claire is sitting at a conference room table by herself. In walks CHRISTIAN (40's) -- an ivy league attorney with a reassuring confidence about him -- and a WOMAN ATTORNEY(30's), average, dressed professional.

The woman walks in first.

WOMAN ATTORNEY

Ms. Heks, this is our senior partner, Christian Bowers.

Christian reaches across the table to shake her hand.

CHRISTIAN

Mrs. Gibbs.

WOMAN ATTORNEY

We think we got what we needed.

She opens a folder and pulls out 8x10 photos. They are the ones taken outside of Joseph's home.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTIAN

I think we're going to win this.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

PARKING LOT

Annie drives Joseph and the girls in to the school lot to drop them off. There are far fewer parents outside the school.

From the backseat Lucy pleads with him.

LUCY

Daddy, will you please walk me to my classroom today?

Joseph looks at the small crowd of people, dreading a confrontation with another reporter. Satisfied there are none, he agrees.

JOSEPH

Okay honey.

Annie pulls the car in to a parking spot from the drop off point. Joseph gets out as do Jenny and Lucy. He peeks his head through the window to Annie.

JOSEPH

I'll be right back.

ANNIE

Okay, then we're meeting your friend Kurt for coffee?

JOSEPH

Right.

Joseph turns to grab the girls' hands. Jenny has already walked away and is on campus, Lucy is eager to accept.

SCHOOL YARD

Joseph and Lucy walk to her classroom door. He gives her a big hug.

JOSEPH

Okay honey, have a good day.

LUCY

You too, love you daddy.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH
Love you too.

Joseph rises and turns to walk away from Lucy. He doesn't make it far when a MAN (30's) in khaki pants and a polo shirt, looking like any other teacher, approaches him with a big smile.

MAN
Mr. Felix?

JOSEPH
Yes?

MAN
Here.

The man place a folded piece of paper in Josephs hand.

MAN (CONT'D)
You've been served.

POV: From the distance Joseph is seen accepting the paper. A camera shot is taken.

Joseph is perplexed. The man turns and walks away.

CUT TO:

Joseph walks to his car, his sister sees the hurt and pain in his face. She gets out and goes to him.

ANNIE
What, what's wrong?

Joseph hands her the paper.

JOSEPH
Claire is suing me for custody of
the girls.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Joseph and Annie walk in to the coffee house to find Kurt already sitting.

Kurt identifies something in Joseph's face.

KURT
What's wrong?

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

Claire is suing for custody of the girls.

ANNIE

She had him served at their school.

KURT

What? At the school?

Joseph nods and is trying to maintain his emotions of hurt and anger. Not crying, but not coherent either.

KURT (CONT'D)

Sit down, this ones on me.

LATER

Joseph, Kurt and Annie are all sitting at the table in the coffee shop.

ANNIE

It'll help and maybe we can keep the girls.

KURT

She's right Joe, there is no reason you shouldn't have those girls. You're a good father just on rough times. Show them that you're doing whatever it takes and you'll be okay.

ANNIE

I want you guys to move in with me. I really do. It's not charity, it's family.

KURT

There's nothing wrong with charity either.

Joseph just looks between the two of them, absorbing their comments. After taking it in, he responds, looking at Annie.

JOSEPH

Thank you.

INT. JOSEPH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joseph is in his bedroom packing, paying special attention to pictures of him and his wife. He sits, then lays down on the edge of the bed.

INT. MILITARY BUNK ROOM AFGHANISTAN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A four year younger Joseph is lying in bed fast asleep.

CORPORAL (O.S.)
Sarge. Sarge. Sarge!

Joseph wakes with wide and confused eyes. He turns to look at the man waking him up.

The Corporal is standing in his Air Force desert camo work wear with panic shown on his face.

CORPORAL
Sarge, they said they need to talk to you.

JOSEPH
Okay. Now calm down Corporal.
(he smiles)
It'll be okay.

The Corporal's eyes look down, then up again.

CORPORAL
It's not a malfunctioning unit
Sarge, it's a call from home. It's,
it's your wife sarge, something's
wrong.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

BEDROOM

Joseph wakes up and rolls to his side.

He looks at a picture of his wife on his nightstand and speaks to it as if responding to a statement.

JOSEPH
You're right.

MONTAGE - JOSEPH RE-DOUBLES HIS EFFORTS

-- Joseph looking for a job, dropping off applications

-- Joseph and the girls packing up the house.

-- Annie driving Joseph around, he is dropping off applications and picking up new ones.

INT. ANNIE'S CAR - DAY

Annie and Joseph are in Annie's car, she's driving. They are both solemn.

ANNIE

They're your girls, they'll always
be your girls, no matter what.

JOSEPH

How did I get here? How did I let
it get this bad, where this was
ever a possibility?

ANNIE

It doesn't matter, focus on the
future, focus on the girls.

Joseph accepts this in silence.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Off to the courthouse I guess?

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

HALLWAY

Joseph and Annie wait outside the courtroom. Kurt walks up to them.

KURT

Hey, sorry I'm late. What's going
on?

ANNIE

Just waiting to get called in.

KURT

(to Joseph)
Where's your attorney?

Joseph stares at Kurt a moment.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH
Can't afford one.

KURT
What?! Can't you find one that
would do it for free, or have one
provided for you?

ANNIE
That's only if you get accused of a
crime. If some witch is trying to
take your kids away, you're on your
own.

A COURT CLERK comes out from the courtroom with a clipboard,
looking at it.

COURT CLERK
Felix?

Court Clerk looks up and around for a respondent.

Joseph begins to walk towards the clerk when he notices
Claire and Claire's attorney Christian round the corner.
They don't acknowledge Joseph, Annie or his friend as they
walk in ahead of them.

The courtroom is like every courtroom anyone has ever seen
on TV, Joseph pauses, not knowing where to go. By process of
elimination he goes to the left as Claire and her attorney
occupy the table on the right.

As Joseph walks in Annie and Kurt take seats behind Joseph.
They take turns gripping his shoulder in support.

The Court Clerk nods to the BALIFF.

BALIFF
All rise. Court is now in session,
the Honorable Gina L. Tridate
presiding.

JUDGE TRIDATE (50's) walks in from the side of the judges
bench, steps up to her seat and takes it.

JUDGE TRIDATE
(to no one specific)
You may be seated.
(to the clerk)
Okay, what's first up?

(CONTINUED)

COURT CLERK

Felix, custody hearing. Maternal Grandmother seeking custody of two female minors, aged twelve and nine, on the grounds of claimed unstable, unsafe and financial depravity in their current residence. Current custody with the biological father.

Annie stirs in her seat. She leans in to Kurt whispering.

ANNIE

Biological father? How cold, he's their daddy!

Kurt nods his agreement of her frustration.

JUDGE TRIDATE

Okay, it is the normal practice of this court to maintain primary custody and residence with a biological parent, unless, a clear and present danger, for lack of better terms, has been demonstrated. It's not just enough to be "better off".

She uses air quotes to punctuate her last words. She then looks at both sides to ensure her point was made.

JUDGE TRIDATE(CONT'D)

Okay.
(to Christian)
Counselor?

Christian rises.

CHRISTIAN

Thank you your honor. We intend to prove today that not only does a dire financial situation prevent Mr. Felix from properly caring for Jenny and Lucy Felix, but that his recklessness and past decision history also poses a clear and present danger that even with subsidized assistance, Mr. Felix is unable to maintain a safe environment for the girls and they should therefore be put in the custody of their maternal grandmother my client Claire Heks.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE TRIDATE
(to Joseph)
And you are Mr. Felix?

Joseph stands.

JOSEPH
Yes your honor.

JUDGE TRIDATE
And you're representing yourself?

JOSEPH
Yes ma'am.

JUDGE TRIDATE
Do you have a statement in
response?

JOSEPH
Nothing prepared your honor. But, I
don't truly know how we can be
here. I may not be a rich man, but
I've never hurt my children, I take
care of them the best I can, and
give them all the love I have to
give. They have a home, my sister
has said we can stay with her, and
I'll do what needs to be done to
ensure they are fed.

(he pauses a beat)
I guess, that's all I have right
now.

JUDGE TRIDATE
(to Christian)
Counselor?

CHRISTIAN
Thank you your honor, we'd like to
call my client Ms. Claire Heks.

CUT TO:

Claire is on the stand. Christian walks towards her to ask a
question.

CHRISTIAN
Ms. Heks, why have you brought this
action forward today?

As if on cue, Claire starts to tear up.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

I love my grandchildren, and I can no longer stand by while they live with Mr. Felix.

Annie is agitated once again.

ANNIE

(to Kurt)

Mr. Felix? He's their father.

Annie's whispered comments revealing both anger and hurt.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I can't stand by while they're starving for food, being mal-nourished, missing their childhood. They aren't safe there.

CHRISTIAN

Have you ever seen Mr. Felix physically harm the girls in any way?

The courtroom falls silent.

CLAIRE

(sheepishly, as if she's holding back a secret)

I've never seen him hurt the girls.

Annie jumps up.

ANNIE

Of course he hasn't!

The judge strikes the gavel.

JUDGE TRIDATE

Order! Any future outbursts and you'll be removed.

Annie sits down, stewing.

CLAIRE

(to the judge)

That's the safe home my granddaughters are supposed to be going too?

LATER SAME MORNING

Christian stands, Claire at her seat next to him.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTIAN

Your honor, we'd like to bring Fred Dryer to the stand.

Joseph is surprised to hear his uncles name, as are Annie and Kurt.

Fred, in dramatic showmanship, rises and walks to his seat.

He is sworn in by the Baliff.

CHRISTIAN

Mr. Dryer, Mr. Felix is currently in financial debt to you, is that correct?

FRED

Yes.

CHRISTIAN

And how much does he owe you?

FRED

\$63,234

CHRISTIAN

This was when Mr. Felix was under the impression that he was to come in to millions from the lottery right?

FRED

Yes.

CHRISTIAN

Did you know he was allowing his daughter to gamble?

Joseph is appalled, he flattens his hands on the table to regain control, turning them white in the process.

Annie and Kurt are about to yell out when they contain themselves.

JUDGE TRIDATE

Mr. Baker, Mr. Felix has not been charged with a crime so therefore I won't allow reference to such to be used in this case.

CHRISTIAN

Apologies your honor.

(back to Fred)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTIAN (cont'd)

I retract the question. Did you, at that time, have any indication he was not going to receive the money.

FRED

No, for the first time in years, I actually thought he was good for it.

CHRISTIAN

Has Mr. Felix ever asked you for money before?

FRED

Oh yeah, lots of times.

Christian walks back over to the desk and picks up a file. He brings it back over towards the witness stand. He extracts a sheet of paper.

CHRISTIAN

Can you tell me what this is?

FRED

It's a copy of an email I got from Joey, uh, Mr. Felix.

CHRISTIAN

Would you read this email to us please.

FRED

"Fred, I know I asked a couple of months ago for a few bucks, but I don't know what else to do, I've got nothing left."

CHRISTIAN

Did you loan him any.

FRED

I felt like if I did, it wouldn't be used properly.

JUDGE TRIDATE

Please answer yes or no.

FRED

No.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTIAN

Why not?

A sly look back to Claire as if to say "see, worked it back in."

FRED

I didn't think it would really help, he'd just ask for more the next week. Wasn't going to do anyone any good.

CHRISTIAN

You heard the Judge say that financial challenges alone doesn't mean the children shouldn't be with their father.

Fred nods, he did.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Does he provide a secure home?

FRED

Couldn't tell you, never invited over.

CHRISTIAN

Has he ever hurt the children.

Fred takes in a deep breath, then drops his head in slight shame.

The room quiets again.

FRED

(in a somewhat accusatory tone)

He would never invite me over...

Joseph stands up angry and hurt.

JOSEPH

What is she paying you to say this?!

The Judge bangs her gavel.

JUDGE TRIDATE

Order Mr. Felix, order.

Kurt and Annie try to calm him down from behind.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE TRIDATE

(to Fred)

But since he has no council, I would like to ask you, Mr. Dryer, have you been given or promised any form of compensation for your testimony. Remember, you are under oath.

Fred starts to sweat. He looks anxiously at Claire, who is stone.

JUDGE TRIDATE

Mr. Dryer?

FRED

They... they told me Joey's debt would be taken care of.

The courtroom gets loud with chatter.

The Judge bangs her gavel.

JUDGE TRIDATE

Order! Mr. Dryer, you are excused.

Fred stands and works to escape quickly.

The Judge comments on Fred's departure.

JUDGE TRIDATE(CONT'D)

Best not hope the DA's office reads today's transcripts.

JOSEPH

Is that it?

JUDGE TRIDATE

No Mr. Felix, this isn't a criminal investigation where we stop because of a legal technicality, there are kids lives at stake here. We will continue.

(now to Christian)

But tread lightly. We'll break for lunch.

She bangs her gavel.

INT. COURTHOUSE CAFETERIA - DAY

Joseph is sits at a small table in the court's cafeteria. His head down, lost and defeated.

Annie and Kurt walk up with a tray each, Kurt carrying a third with options for Joseph. He slides it in front of Joseph who doesn't move.

Annie just looks at Kurt, she too is lost and feeling defeated.

Kurt sits down.

KURT

I, I tried Charlie and my boss again. Nothing there.

Joseph doesn't move.

Annie sits. She remains upset then gathers her thoughts.

ANNIE

Hey. Knock it off bro.

Joseph sits up, surprised at her attitude.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I seem to remember a cool headed Air Force Sergeant who was calm under pressure and would attack any situation knowing he was going to find the solution.

JOSEPH

This is a little different.

ANNIE

Really? I don't think it is. You told me the key to crisis management was always confidence.

JOSEPH

Something I'm lacking at the moment.

ANNIE

Oh, I thought you cared about the girls.

Joseph flashes frustration and pain. His voice reflects this.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

How can you say something like that? You know I'd do anything for those girls!

ANNIE

Are you their best option? Are you the person they should be with? Will you take care of those girls?

JOSEPH

Of course.

ANNIE

You will? Do you believe it?

JOSEPH

Yes.

ANNIE

Are you sure.

JOSEPH

(his voice getting louder and more confident)

Yes!

ANNIE

You're sure? You're confident?

JOSEPH

YES!

ANNIE

Why?

JOSEPH

Because I'm their father.

ANNIE

And?

JOSEPH

And I love them.

ANNIE

And?

JOSEPH

And I will take care of them and give them more love than anyone else ever could. They will never want for love, food or shelter.

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE
Are you sure!?

JOSEPH
Yes!

ANNIE
Are you sure?

Joseph takes in a deep breath and gives her the strongest most confident look he has ever given to another person.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Joseph, Annie and Kurt all walk back in to the courtroom and take their previous seats.

BALIFF
All rise.

They do. Judge Tridate enters and sits.

JUDGE TRIDATE
You may be seated. Clerk?

COURT CLERK
Resuming family custody case for
Felix.

JUDGE TRIDATE
(to Christian)
Counselor?

CHRISTIAN
We'd like to have Mr. Felix on the
stand your honor.

JUDGE TRIDATE
(to Joseph)
Mr. Felix?

Joseph looks back at Annie and Kurt. He notices someone in the back of the courtroom, recognition. Where has he seen him before? Joseph looks forward again.

JOSEPH
Yes your honor.

CUT TO:

Joseph is now on the witness stand.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTIAN

Do you have a current monthly salary?

JOSEPH

Right now I'm...

CHRISTIAN

Yes or no please.

JOSEPH

No.

CHRISTIAN

Do you have any savings, any liquid assets?

JOSEPH

Well, I have my aunt's...

CHRISTIAN

Yes or no?

JOSEPH

No.

CHRISTIAN

Do you own your own home, your own car or your own business that has any material assets worth over \$1,000.

JOSEPH

No. But I...

CHRISTIAN

You've answered.

(pauses to complete his control)

Mr. Felix, do you have any debt?

JOSEPH

Well, I...

JUDGE TRIDATE

Specifics Counselor.

CHRISTIAN

Do you owe other people or companies more than \$50,000 combined?

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

Yes.

CHRISTIAN

Now, the judge has made it clear that financial stability, or a clear lack there of, does not make you or living with you a clear and present danger to the stability of your children. But...

He walks back to his table and grabs a file then walks back to the witness stand. He pulls out a single sheet of paper, he carefully hands it to Joseph.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Could you please read me the title of this report at the top of this page?

Joseph looks at it and does so.

JOSEPH

Department of Child Protective Services: Home Visit Summary Report

CHRISTIAN

Would you read the last two sentences please?

Joseph reads them to himself first.

JOSEPH

That's not fair, the details say...

CHRISTIAN

Please read the requested section.

Joseph looks to the judge for guidance, she nods her approval to do so.

JOSEPH

Legal guardian, father, appears to have limited resources and appearance of outdated food and other perishables has created a nutritional deficiency and danger.

CHRISTIAN

(looking to the Judge)
A danger.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH

But it also says...

CHRISTIAN

You've read it already, we'll move on.

The Judge overrules Christian without saying those words.

JUDGE TRIDATE

Go ahead Mr. Felix.

JOSEPH

It also says "Father appears to be without sustainable income but not without intent to care and provide. Recommend assistance and support services to ensure maintenance of on-going residence and nutrition."

CHRISTIAN

And you've had years to do this Mr. Felix. You have no permanent residence...

JOSEPH

I do now, we do now...

CHRISTIAN

You've been too stubborn to take help.

JOSEPH

I let my pride get in my way, but I understand taking care of the girls is more important...

CHRISTIAN

And you have no job.

JOSEPH

But I continue...

MAN (O.S.)

Yes, he does.

Everyone in the court turns to see the director of the veterans charity Charles Grant stand up from the back row of the courtroom with a piece of paper in his hand.

CHARLES GRANT

He does have a job your honor. May I approach the bench?

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE TRIDATE
(waving him up)
Come here.

Charles Grant approaches the bench.

CHRISTIAN
Your honor, I object.

JUDGE TRIDATE
Noted.
(to Charles Grant)
And you are?

CHARLES GRANT
Charles Grant, Executive Director
of VetHire Sacramento. In my hand
is an offer letter for Mr. Felix,
assuming he accepts, he does have a
job.

CHRISTIAN
An employment agency is hardly...

CHARLES GRANT
We're not an employment agency, but
that isn't the point. We're
offering Mr. Felix a job working
for us, as our IT Manager. It's not
going to make him rich, but he will
be able to provide for his family,
and we're happy to withhold some
wages for his debts as well.
(staring down Christian)
We're understanding like that.

Judge Tridate takes the paper and reviews it. She then hands
it to Joseph who takes it and reviews it.

JUDGE TRIDATE
Mr. Felix, will you be accepting
Mr. Grant's offer.

Joseph is overwhelmed, but manages an affirmative nod.

JOSEPH
Yes.
(now smiling)
Yes I will.

CHRISTIAN
Your honor I object.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE TRIDATE

Noted. (to Joseph) Mr. Felix, there have been some valid concerns brought forth today, but I also feel there is no immediate safety issue or danger and that you are willing and capable of care. (to the room) I'm ordering we re-review this case in 90 days.

(to Joseph)

Maintain your happy home, work this job and provide for your girls.

JOSEPH

Yes ma'am.

She bangs the gavel.

Joseph gets up, walks up to Charles Grant and shakes his hand with enthusiasm.

Annie and Kurt get up and embrace in excitement, as they pull apart, their eyes catch in a new way.

Claire packs up her items in defeat.

HALLWAY

Joseph and Charles Grant walk out from the courtroom. Joseph goes to shake Charles' hand again.

JOSEPH

Thank you for betting on me.

CHARLES GRANT

Oh, I don't gamble. You're a sure thing.

Joseph looks puzzled.

CHARLES GRANT (CONT'D)

My good friend, Colonel Grey, US Army retired, told me about you. He shared with me what happened the night he called on you to stop what could have been...

Charles leans in and whispers.

CHARLES GRANT (CONT'D)

... a very unfortunate incident.

INT. FLIGHT CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

CONTINUATION OF PRIOR FLIGHT CONTROL ROOM FLASHBACK

Lt. Col. Grey stares down Joseph.

Joseph acknowledges the stare.

JOSEPH

Sir, I've got this.

Joseph sits down at a control panel. He begins to type and work the panel.

The missile timer now reads "00:02:54:12".

A red rotating bubble light goes of in the corner. An audible ALARM follows it.

LT. COLONEL GREY

Sergeant?

Joseph calm and collected, ignores him.

The missile timer now reads "00:02:12:47".

The others in the room start to show their panic. Sweat beading, anguished glances to each other.

A PRIVATE in the back leans in to the corporal.

PRIVATE

What happens if this doesn't work?

CORPORAL

You'll wish you joined the coast guard.

LT. COLONEL GREY (CONT'D)

Sergeant Felix?

Joseph remains the one calm aspect of this otherwise panicked and chaotic scene.

The missile timer now reads "00"01:51:32".

Lt. Col. Grey stares at the timer.

Joseph looks at the monitor screen and punches at the control panel with the detached focus of a court stenographer. He looks to the countdown timer and nods.

The countdown timer shows "00:01:34:51", and stops.

The room erupts in joy.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

HALLWAY

Charles Grant speaks as if he had just recounted the story to Joseph.

CHARLES GRANT

I figure, any man who can handle a situation like the one Colonel Grey described to me, in the way you did, can surely handle our little problems.

Joseph smiles in a humbled fashion.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Annie and Joseph walks down the courthouse steps.

JOSEPH

Can you go get the girls, let them know they get to stay with daddy and that he got a job?

ANNIE

Okay, but where are you going?

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Joseph is kneeling in front of his wife's headstone again.

JOSEPH

(to the headstone/grave)

Well, I'm sure you saw what happened. Not even you angels in heaven could have missed the story of the widowed father of two who won, then lost the lottery, on a technicality.

Joseph pauses and looks around, then back to the grave with a tearful smile.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

But I knew you wouldn't let it end like that, I knew you'd find a way to save us. The nice folks at the veterans support charity, turns out they needed a new IT manager and wouldn't you know it, they understand the importance of taking

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH (CONT'D) (cont'd)
time off to care for an ill spouse.
Especially a veteran doing so.

Joseph pauses again.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
My sister's going to let us live in
her travel trailer. It's not much,
but it's better than being on the
street. Remember our first
apartment? They called it a studio,
we called it a closet with running
water, but we were together. That's
all I really cared about then, it's
what I care about now. I realize,
if we hadn't had our story on TV
and if I hadn't gone through what I
went through, that veterans charity
would not have heard about me. I
know you had your hand in that, so
thank you. It all happened for a
reason...

Joseph smiles a knowing smile.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Most people lose the lottery and
nothing happens. I lose the
lottery, and get a job out of it.
That's the only way I can look at
it. And for that, I'm truly
thankful.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - DAY

Joseph picks up a packed box inside his living room.

The doorbell rings.

Joseph approaches the door and looks through the peephole.

JOSEPH
Who is it?

FRANK (O.S.)
My name is Frank Roberts, Mr.
Felix.

JOSEPH
No more interviews.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK (O.S.)
I'm not with the media Mr. Felix,
I'm with Ryers, Manson and Trut
Attorneys.

JOSEPH
I got the eviction notice, we're
working on it, please, just give us
--

FRANK
This isn't regarding your home Mr.
Felix.

Joseph looks anxious.

JOSEPH
What's this regarding then?

FRANK (O.S.)
Your life insurance claim.

Joseph opens the door and stares at Frank.

JOSEPH
My what?

Frank reaches in to his briefcase and pulls out a manila
envelope. He hands it to Joseph.

FRANK
Your life insurance claim, for your
wife's passing.

JOSEPH
We didn't have life insurance.

FRANK
It appears to be through her work.
Sorry it took this long to process,
but due to the extra riders she
selected, it took longer than
normal to verify. Plus, the policy
is quite old. That's part of the
reason why it took so long.

Joseph looks at a check that was inside the envelope.

INSERT - CHECK

The amount is for somewhat more than \$1 million.

BACK TO JOSEPH

(CONTINUED)

Joseph looks up at Frank, tears start to come down his face.

Frank looks somewhat sheepish.

FRANK

I'm, I'm sorry for your loss. Good day.

Joseph walks back inside of his house. His daughters are bringing out boxes.

JOSEPH

Set those down girls, we're staying.

LUCY

Really?

JOSEPH

Really.

His daughters drop their boxes and run and hug him. He hugs them back, tears of joy streaming down his face. He looks up to the heavens and mouths "thank you"

THE END