

Alleigance

By

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INT. GARAGE - MORNING

MIKE, 18, works out, does sit ups, crunches, etc. Mike is shirtless with the sides of his head shaved. "In the End" by Linkin Park blasts. The television is on.

AMERICAN FLAG

hangs on the wall.

Mike pushes a button to increase the speed of the treadmill. He pants as he runs.

A FAMILY PICTURE

of Mike, his mom and dad.

MIKE'S TATTOO ON HIS SHOULDER

with an eagle and American flag.

A PHOTO

of Mike kissing his girlfriend, Jackie, on the cheek, with graduation caps on and a sign that says "GHS 2002" behind them.

A POSTER

of "GO ARMY"

The television screen displays images of CITIZENS standing next to Ground Zero, holding American flags. The caption reads "Crowds gather to honor one year anniversary of 9/11."

Mike runs on the treadmill, while watching the television screen.

The television screen displays footage of firefighters responding to the scene of 9/11.

CINDY, 50, opens the door to the garage. She has greying hair and wrinkles, but was clearly beautiful when she was younger.

CINDY
(yelling over the music)
Mike. Mike. MICHAEL!

Mike stops the treadmill and turns the music off the boombox.

(CONTINUED)

CINDY

Mike are you ready to go?

MIKE

Almost.

CINDY

Ok, well we should probably leave soon. You've been watching the coverage?

MIKE

Yeah, they just finished some tribute. It makes me sick.

Cindy and Mike watch the television. Mike is tearing up as he watches. REPORTER with a microphone comes on the screen.

REPORTER

The 19 members of al-Quaeda commandeered four different airlines and coordinated a suicide attack, which ultimately lead to the loss of over 3,000-

Cindy immediately turns the television off.

MIKE

Fuck you for taking my Dad away!
FUCK YOU!

Cindy walks over to hug Mike.

CINDY

Come on, Mike. Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - MORNING

Mike and Cindy silently pray next to his father's grave. Mike places a miniature American flag next to the grave.

CINDY

What time are you going in tomorrow?

MIKE

I think around noon.

(CONTINUED)

CINDY

Ok, well I can drive you and just call in sick.

MIKE

I have a license, Mom. I don't need your support to sign the papers. Now, when I head off to the Middle East in a few months, then I'm sure you can get an excused absence from the principal.

CINDY

Don't be a smart ass. Are you sure you wanna go through with this?

MIKE

Mom, we're not getting into this again.

CINDY

I know. But you need to be sure about it.

MIKE

Mom, I'm going. Please. And there's nothing that's gonna change my mind about it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Cindy and Mike pull into the driveway of their small house. JACKIE, 18, a beautiful brunette girl, sits on his doorstep.

CINDY

Hi Jackie.

JACKIE

Hi Cindy.

Cindy hugs Jackie and walks inside.

MIKE

Jackie, what are you doing here?

JACKIE

I need to talk to you.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

How long have you been here?

JACKIE

Did you enlist yet?

MIKE

No, that's not until tomorrow,
babe, what's up?

JACKIE

I, uh, Mike.

MIKE

What's the matter?

JACKIE

Are you definitely going to go?

MIKE

Jackie. What is the matter? We've
talked about this.

Jackie cries hysterically and hugs Mike.

MIKE

Babe, come on. You know I needa do
this. I still love you, you know
that. I just won't be around as
much, but I still-

JACKIE

This isn't just about us anymore.

MIKE

What do you mean? Jackie?

JACKIE

Remember that night when we were
lying on the pier and you said you
would always be there for me?

MIKE

Jackie, what's going on?

JACKIE

And you said you would always-

MIKE

Jackie.

JACKIE
Mike, I'm pregnant.

Mike blankly stares at Jackie.

JACKIE
I'm pregnant, Mike. I'm having a
kid. Your kid.

MIKE
Is this some kind of sick joke?

JACKIE
Mike, I'm pregnant.

Jackie starts crying.

MIKE
Just don't tell anyone and take
care of it.

JACKIE
What is that supposed to mean?

MIKE
Get an abortion.

JACKIE
Are you kidding me?

MIKE
Jackie, I'm enlisting in the army
tomorrow. What the fuck else is
there to do?

JACKIE
Mike, I'm not getting an abortion.

MIKE
This is not real life. Fuck this.

JACKIE
Mike, calm down. This isn't any
easier for me.

MIKE
Do you understand what tomorrow is?
I am enlisting in the army. You
can't get out of that.

JACKIE
Mike, you can't leave me hanging
like this.

MIKE

What does that mean?

JACKIE

If I'm having this kid, do you expect to just disappear and let me raise our child alone for years, when you could potentially be killed? Mike, you can't go.

MIKE

Excuse me?

JACKIE

Listen to me. If you leave, then we are done. And you will not be in this child's life.

Jackie runs away to her car as she cries. Mike punches his face repeatedly.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Mike sits in his room, staring at the photo of his father. His room is fully decorated with Army and USA posters.

Cindy knocks on his door and enters the room.

CINDY

Michael? Everything OK?

MIKE

I just need some alone time.

CINDY

I know when you're lying to me. Tell me what the matter is.

MIKE

I don't know.

CINDY

Are you nervous about enlisting?

MIKE

No. I mean, I need to do it. Right? I'm doing it for Dad.

(CONTINUED)

CINDY

You don't sound as sure about it as you did this morning.

MIKE

No, I'm sure. I miss Dad so much. I need to fight for him, Mom, you know that.

CINDY

I can tell something is really bothering you. I can't help you unless you tell me.

MIKE

(mumbles)

Jackie's pregnant.

CINDY

What did you say?

MIKE

Jackie is pregnant.

Cindy hugs Mike.

CINDY

Oh, Michael. You've gone through so much more stuff than anyone twice your age.

MIKE

And she told me that she's leaving me forever if I leave. Mom, what do I do?

CINDY

I can't tell you exactly what to do since it's your life.

MIKE

I need to go to the army.

CINDY

Do what you need to do, but think about this past year without Dad. Imagine that being your whole life.

MIKE

You just don't want me to go. I can't deal with this shit.

(CONTINUED)

CINDY

I didn't mean to upset you, I'm just trying to help.

MIKE

Please leave. Please.

CINDY

This isn't something that is just going to go away. You need to figure something out. Tomorrow is the day you're enlisting.

MIKE

Oh really? I had no idea. Get out of my room. Please just shut up and get out of my face.

CINDY

Fighting me, or anyone for that matter, isn't going to make all your problems go away.

Cindy leaves the room. Mike looks at pictures of his father. He flips through a scrapbook Jackie made him for their 1 year anniversary.

CUT TO:

INT. HANK'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

GREG, 18, a chubby guy in desperate need of a shave, and HANK, 18, a tall and lanky guy with shaggy hair, sit on a worn out couch with Mike. The room is messy, with posters of girls in bikinis hung up on the walls. Hank raises his beer can.

HANK

Cheers to Mike. His last night out before he is officially a big tough army guy.

GREG

This is gonna be the best army bachelor party ever.

DRINKING SEQUENCE-GREG'S BASEMENT-MONTAGE

Mike, Greg and Hank chug a beer.

Mike funnels a beer, with Greg holding the funnel.

Greg pours shots.

(CONTINUED)

Mike chugs another beer.

Hank tries to dance, but trips and falls over. Greg dumps a beer on him.

Mike punches Greg in the face. Greg punches him back. They laugh.

Greg is passed out on the couch. Hank and Mike jump on him. He wakes up and they all sit on the couch.

Empty beers, an empty bottle of vodka and cups fill the room.

MIKE

So she tells me she won't be with me again. What the fuck.

GREG

Dude, you're screwed.

MIKE

Thanks, asshole.

HANK

Does she not understand everything with your dad, though?

MIKE

She was so supportive of me going to fight for him and then lays this shit on me. She's never been this selfish before.

GREG

I'm trying to think of some words of encouragement, but I seriously have nothing to say.

Hank throws a pillow at Greg.

HANK

Mike, you gotta get your mind off of this.

MIKE

It makes me sick to think about.

We hear a car horn honk.

GREG

That's definitely my mom here to pick us up. Do you guys still wanna go paintballing tomorrow morning?

(CONTINUED)

HANK

I'm always down. Mike, don't you have to enlist early?

MIKE

Yeah, we'll go before I do.

GREG

Hank, you're driving us tomorrow. I call shotgun, bitches.

CUT TO:

EXT. PAINTBALL FIELD - MORNING

Hank, Mike, and Greg put on paintball masks and load their paintball guns with paintballs. We see trees covered with paint, barrels and rocks, appearing similar to a battlefield.

GREG

So amped for this.

HANK

Nothing better than some good ole' fashion hungover paintballing.

GREG

Shut up, you lightweight.

MIKE

I'm gonna ruin the enemies' lives, ladies.

GREG

I feel like it should be illegal that someone enlisting in the army plays paintball. You're like the steroids of paintball.

HANK

What are you talking about?

MANAGER, 30, walks over to them.

MANAGER

The next round starts in a few minutes, so get all of your stuff together and head over to the base.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

The enemies better watch out.

Hank, Mike and Greg follow Manager to the base. The base is painted blue. Manager hands them all blue bandanas to put around their necks.

MANAGER

(on a megaphone)

Ok, so you all know how the game works. You get shot, you leave the area and go to the dead zone. No shooting anyone on your team. Blue shoots red, red shoots blue. Please keep your helmets on the whole game. You all ready to paintball?

Players on both the blue and red team cheer.

MANAGER

Ok, let the games begin.

Mike hides behind a tree. It is silent as PLAYERS on both teams go to their respective locations. Greg and Hank hide behind various barriers close to Mike.

MIKE

Be careful of those barrels with the holes in it. They don't need to move from behind the barrier to shoot you.

The large field is silent, as the leaves fall off the trees. Players on both teams remain frozen behind their various barriers.

MIKE

Someone is gonna need to make the first move. We'll wait for them to come to us.

GREG

You're way too ready for this.

MIKE

Oh, you don't even know.

After a long silence, a paintball hits the tree right behind Mike. Many more shots follow.

As RED PLAYER 1 gets closer to Mike, Mike runs to another tree. He shoots the red player, who puts his hands in the air and walks to the Dead Zone.

(CONTINUED)

GREG

Good shot.

RED PLAYER 2 strikes Greg with a paintball.

GREG SCREAMS.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Cindy is on the phone screaming. Mike walks over to her and hugs her. His eyes begin welling up with tears.

BACK TO PRESENT

Mike aggressively shoots Red Player 2 over 10 times.

MANAGER

Only shoot a player once! This is
not a real war, goddammit.

AN AMERICAN FLAG

flies on a flagpole next to the field. Mike stares at it.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A group of MOURNERS stare at a coffin, with an American flag on it, as it moves to the ground. Mike's eyes stare intently at the coffin, as others around him cry at his father's burial.

BACK TO PRESENT

Mike's eyes are welling up with tears as he reloads his paintball gun. He pants and sweats. He looks around for more red players to shoot.

Suddenly, a paintball almost hits him. He scopes out more players to shoot. Mike crawls to the tree next to him.

A PLANE

flies high over the field.

(CONTINUED)

JACKIE (V.O.)

If you leave, then we are done. And you will not be in this child's life.

Mike shoots at RED PLAYER 3 and misses.

At the tree next to Mike, MAN, 50, stands in front of his SON, 12.

SON

Dad, I haven't shot anyone all day.

MAN

I'll block you and then you shoot the guy behind the rock over there.

Mike looks at the man and his son.

CINDY (V.O)

Do what you need to do, but think about this past year without Dad. Imagine that being your whole life.

Mike stands up and starts to run at Red Player 3, who is positioned behind the tree.

Mike sees the man run in front of his son. The man jumps out of the way quickly, allowing the son to shoot. The man gives his son a high five.

JACKIE (V.O.)

If I'm having this kid, do you expect to just disappear and let me raise our child alone for years, when you could potentially be killed? Mike, you can't go.

Mike shoots Red Player 3, but misses as he dives behind the tree.

Mike sees the man get shot by a paintball. The son scurries to a nearby barrier and ducks.

CUT TO:

INT. JACKIE'S DOORSTEP - DAY

ARMY REPRESENTATIVE knocks on the door. Jackie opens it, with a baby in her hand. She cries hysterically.

BACK TO PRESENT

Red Player 3 emerges from the tree. Mike runs to him. Just as Mike is about to pull the trigger, he gets shot.

MANAGER

You're dead. Get to the dead zone.

Mike stops and looks at the red paint all over his jacket.

MANAGER

I repeat, get to the dead zone.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING

Mike sits in silence on his couch. His jacket is still covered in paint.

Cindy walks in with a cup of water.

CINDY

Mike, you should probably go shower. I don't want my sofa to be a casualty of paintball.

Mike continues to stare in front of him.

MIKE

Can you leave the keys on the counter?

CINDY

So you made your decision?

INT. CAR - MORNING

Mike drives his car in silence. He wears a suit and tie. His eyes are focused on the road. His enlistment forms are on the seat next to him.

He continues driving and sees TWO PARENTS walking with a stroller.

At a red light, he looks at the picture of his father he keeps behind the rear view mirror. The light turns green and he drives.

He takes a right, and parks his car. He exits the car.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MORNING

Mike closes the door to the car. He walks through the parking lot, with enlistment forms in his hands. He finally reaches a door, takes a deep breath and knocks.

We see Mike, as we hear the door open. He smiles.

JACKIE

is at the doorway.

She smiles and begins to tear up. He hugs her and lets the forms go as he continues to embrace her. He rubs her stomach and walks inside.

The enlistment forms blow away.