

THE GOOD FATHER

16-DE06-W35

Logline:

***A father struggles to rebuild a relationship
with his son after the death of his wife.***

INT. OFFICE - DAY

ANGLE ON a framed photo on the wall of a small office. The image: a silhouetted dad holding up his six-year old son. They appear happy. In the background, the sun sets behind the ocean.

VICTOR intently observes the image. He's a man's man who has seen his share of hard times. Although he's 40, he looks closer to 60.

The door opens and a THERAPIST enters, an attractive woman in her 40s with light brown hair and a professional suit.

THERAPIST
Hello Victor.

Victor nods.

THERAPIST
I'm glad to see you again.

VICTOR
Wish I could say the same.

THERAPIST
It's just standard procedure. You had a big loss in the family, we want to be as supportive as we can.

VICTOR
And make sure my job doesn't suffer. I get it.

She gestures toward the therapy chair.

THERAPIST
Please. Have a seat.

EXT. MOVING CAR - DAY

VICTOR drives down a residential street in his old pickup truck.

THERAPIST (OVERLAP)
So how are you feeling?

VICTOR (OVERLAP)
Okay.

Victor turns into a school street where teenagers are exiting a high school.

THERAPIST (OVERLAP)
And your son? How's he holding up?

VICTOR (OVERLAP)
I don't know. He doesn't talk much.

THERAPIST (OVERLAP)
And are you surprised?

No response.

THERAPIST (OVERLAP)
Have you reached out to him?
I think talking about your wife
could help you both cope with
your loss.

EXT. SIDE STREET

Victor parks the car behind a fence, next to basketball courts.

He dials a number and puts the phone to his ear.

VICTOR
(into the phone)
Hey son, it's dad. Call me when you
get this.

Victor hangs up the phone and waits.

VICTOR (OVERLAP)
I think he's avoiding me.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The therapist is sitting back on her chair. Victor appears more relaxed.

THERAPIST
It's natural part of grieving.
Losing a parent is devastating for
any child and it can create a
strain with the remaining parent.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

ELLIOTT enters the empty basketball courts. He's a skinny high school student who appears to be no more than 15 years old. He has a pair of glasses and freckles and a backpack full of books. He appears tired, frail and completely apathetic to the world.

JACKSON enters the courts behind him.

He's 16 and has a strong build, dark shadows under his eyes and bangs that fall over his face.

Alongside him is ROCCO, 15, chubby-faced and full of acne.

Jackson runs after Elliott.

JACKSON
Hey Four-eyes! Wait up!

EXT. STREET - DAY

Victor leans forward:

Through the windshield, we see the two kids catching up to Elliott.

Victor's face wrinkles with confusion, but he continues to observe.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

Jackson and Rocco reach Elliott and stop.

JACKSON
Hey, where you running off to!

ELLIOTT
I'm going home.

JACKSON
You're going home?

Jackson notices Elliott's red and white striped shirt.

JACKSON
Hey, anybody ever tell you that you look like that guy... What's his name? Waldo? Yeah, that's it!

Jackson turns to Rocco.

JACKSON
Hey dude, doesn't he look just like Waldo?

Rocco snickers.

JACKSON
You got the stripes and everything!
Even the same stupid face!

Jackson pulls at Elliott's shirt.

JACKSON

Who picked that out for you? Your
mommy? Huh? You a mommy's boy
Waldo?

ELLIOTT

I have to go home.

Elliott turns to leave but Jackson grabs his arm.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Victor appears alarmed, but he remains in the car.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Elliott yanks his arm away.

ELLIOTT

Let me go!

JACKSON

What's your hurry Waldo? We're
talking, aren't we?

ELLIOTT

I don't need to talk to you.

JACKSON

No? Why not?

Elliott responds almost instinctively.

ELLIOTT

Because you're a jerk. Everybody
knows that.

Jackson's features soften, he appears hurt.

Elliott's eyes flutter with nervousness. He steps back,
avoiding eye contact with Jackson.

Suddenly, Elliott turns and runs away before Jackson
can even react.

Jackson watches him go.

JACKSON

Go ahead Waldo, run away! We'll
catch up with you next time!

EXT. STREET - DAY

Victor looks down in disappointment.

He lets out a deep sigh as he looks away, worried.

FADE TO:

INT. VICTOR'S HOME HALLWAY - NIGHT

Victor walks up the stairs to the second floor of their modest home with a dinner plate in his hand.

He makes his way to a closed door with a sign that reads:

Login * * * * * ENTER

Victor knocks.

No response.

VICTOR

Hey son?

No response.

VICTOR

I made you a steak wrap, just the way you like it.

No response.

Victor looks down. Contemplates.

He places the plate on a small table next to the door.

VICTOR

Well, I'll leave it here in case you change your mind.

He hesitates.

VICTOR

Hey, I just want you to know that... I want you to know that you can talk to me.

Victor struggles for what to say next, but nothing comes out.

He walks away.

FADE OUT.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Hundreds of lockers line both sides of a wide hallway.

CLOSE ON the wall clock as it hits 3:30pm.

The LOUD BUZZER sounds. Hundreds of teenagers flood the hallway.

EXT. MOVING CAR - DAY

Victor drives down the street leading to the high school.

CHATTY TEENS carry their backpacks and books under their arms as they walk away from the campus, mostly in groups of two or more.

THERAPIST (OVERLAP)

I believe your son's isolation is a desperate cry for help.

VICTOR (OVERLAP)

What do you want me to do? Kick down his door?

THERAPIST (OVERLAP)

Maybe that's what he wants.

From the moving car, Victor sees Elliott across the street, walking alone in the opposite direction.

A few steps behind him are Jackson and Rocco.

Victor makes a U-turn.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Victor sits on the therapy chair with the Therapist facing him, completely engaged.

VICTOR

I think he's dealing with some issues at school.

THERAPIST

Have you considered stepping in?

VICTOR

No. I wouldn't want to embarrass him in front of his friends.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Elliott turns right and walks up the street.

Jackson follows him with Rocco right behind him.

THERAPIST (OVERLAP)
Sometimes, you gotta nip problems
in the bud before they get bigger.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Victor pulls over and stops to observe the teens from a distance.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Jackson catches up to Elliot.

They exchange a few INAUDIBLE WORDS.

Suddenly, Jackson pushes Elliot back and Rocco takes out a book from his bag.

Rocco throws the book to Jackson who opens it and begins tearing out the pages inside.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Victor comes out of the car and just as he's about to rush to the scene...

SECURITY OFFICER (O.S.)
Hey, break it up! Now!

Victor and the three teens turn to see a SECURITY OFFICER lean out of a high school security car slowing down next to them.

Jackson drops Elliott's books on the ground and runs away, followed by Rocco.

Elliott remains to pick up the pieces of his books that are now completely destroyed.

From a distance, Victor watches Elliott with a look of anger and shame on his face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Victor is sitting on the living room sofa.

We hear the FRONT DOOR open.

KEYS DROP on the counter.

Victor turns around.

Only to hear FOOTSTEPS going up the stairs.

The BEDROOM DOOR slams shut.

INT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Victor appears on the second floor and walks up to the bedroom door.

He knocks.

VICTOR

Hey!

LOUD MUSIC begins to play inside the room.

VICTOR

I want to talk to you. You hear me?

No response.

Victor is getting increasingly upset.

He covers his mouth and lets out a deep sigh.

He walks away from the door, only to stop after a few steps.

Then he suddenly turns around and walks back.

And he BANGS on the door as hard as he can!

VICTOR

(angry)

Hey! You know, I'm talking to you!
How long you planning on ignoring
me like this?

Victor turns the door knob. It's locked.

VICTOR

You think you're the only one
hurting?

Victor bangs on the door!

The music stops. Silence.

Victor softens his tone.

VICTOR

It kills me every time I think
about her.

(MORE)

VICTOR (cont'd)
Sometimes, it feels like the world's falling apart and we're left to pick up the pieces. But I know one thing for sure... your mother wouldn't want to see us like this.

Victor waits.

Then he walks away.

FADE OUT.

EXT. SCHOOL ENTRANCE - DAY

The doors open and a crowd of high school students pour out onto the street.

EXT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Elliott is walking through the high school hallway with his head down.

He occasionally glances around to make sure he's not being followed.

EXT. FRONT OF BUNGALOW CLASSROOMS - DAY

Elliott walks past a series of Bungalows.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Just as he comes around the corner to exit, Jackson pushes him so hard that he falls to the ground.

JACKSON
Look! We found Waldo!

Jackson whips his hair back before kicking Elliott in the stomach.

ELLIOTT
Help! Somebody, please help!

JACKSON
Get up!

Elliott struggles to his feet.

And immediately, Rocco holds him back.

Jackson steps in and he raises his hand to punch Elliott.

Suddenly, a hand grabs Jackson's right hand.

Jackson turns around to see Victor towering over him.

Victor grabs Jackson's collar and pushes him back.

Jackson falls to the ground next to where Rocco is standing.

VICTOR

What?! What happened? You're not
such a big shot anymore huh?!

Victor pushes Jackson further back.

VICTOR

Cat got your tongue? Come on, get
back on your feet! Come on! Let's
see what you got big shot!

Jackson stares at Victor, all the color draining from his
face.

VICTOR

Is this how you were raised? You
oughta be ashamed of yourself!

Rocco helps Jackson up.

VICTOR

If I see you near this kid again,
I will come after each one of you.
And next time it won't be pretty!
You understand?

Jackson is looking down.

VICTOR

DO YOU UNDERSTAND?!

Jackson nods.

Then he walks away, followed by Rocco who is equally stunned.

Victor turns around to face Elliott.

VICTOR

You okay?

Elliott nods. He does seem a bit embarrassed.

VICTOR

Can I give you a ride home?

ELLIOTT

It's ok. I got a bike.

Elliott takes his bag and walks away from Victor who appears unsure about whether or not what he did was the right thing.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Victor prepares a dinner plate with pasta and vegetables on one side and chicken on the other.

INT. HOME HALLWAY - NIGHT

Victor comes up the stairs.

And he places the plate on the little table next to the door.

VICTOR
I made you food. Eat it before it
gets cold.

As he begins to walk away, the bedroom door opens.

VOICE (O.S.)
Dad?

Victor turns around to see his son coming out of the bedroom.

It's Jackson.

His eyes are red and the tears on his cheeks still fresh.

JACKSON
I'm sorry.

VICTOR
Food's getting cold.

Jackson's eyes tear up.

JACKSON
I miss her so much, dad.

Victor smiles and raises his hand to Jackson.

Jackson comes closer and Victor embraces him.

FADE TO BLACK.