

"NEW YEAR'S EVE, 50 YEARS APART"

By

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FADE IN:

EXT: AN AIRPORT TARMAC - DAY

SUPER: "2019"

A wide body jetliner rolls to a terminal and its engines spool down. Passenger boarding stairs roll to the jetliner. The passenger door opens. Soldiers in Army Combat Uniforms in the Operational Camouflage Pattern step out of the jetliner and descend the steps.

INT: AN AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

The troops are standing in formation on one side of the terminal. Civilian spectators are on the other side of the terminal.

COLONEL

Parade Rest! I'll make this short and since I know you all want to be with your families. I just want to say it was a privilege to have each and every one of you under my command on this deployment. Attention! Dismissed!

The soldiers break up and the civilians head for them at various paces and with various levels of enthusiasm.

CAPTAIN MARY MURPHY, 26, saunters from the troops she was leading and BILL and CAROL MURPHY, her parents, make their way to her.

CAROL

Oh Mary, I'm so glad you're back.

BILL

Welcome home.

Carol hugs Mary.

MARY

Hello mom, dad, it's great to see you.

Bill hugs Mary.

CONT'D:

BILL

How was your flight?

MARY

Long. How was your flight?

CAROL

It was good.

INT: THE MURPHY'S KITCHEN - DAY

It is a large kitchen with top of the line modern appliances. The kitchen has a breakfast nook. Carol and Bill are in the kitchen. Carol is preparing a meal and Bill is setting the table.

CAROL

I'm going to invite Uncle Joe over for New Year's Eve.

BILL

Okay if you want to.

(Pause)

Why, we rarely see him? You haven't invited him over before?

CAROL

With Aunt May dying this'll be his first New Year's Eve without her. He shouldn't be alone.

BILL

He might not want to come.

CAROL

If he doesn't come, he doesn't come. At least we would have made the gesture.

CONT'D

BILL

Okay if you want to invite him, invite him.

INT: THE MURPHY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

It's a large finished basement. The basement has a bar, an entertainment center with an 86" flat screen TV, a large table with chairs and a buffet table. The buffet table has food from an upscale fast food restaurant. There are a mixture of Christmas and New Year's Eve decorations. The decorations include a banner on the wall that reads "Happy New Year 2020!".

Mary's AUNT MIRANDA, 50, enters the basement.

MIRANDA

Oh Mary!

MARY

Aunt Miranda.

They step to each other and Miranda kisses Mary on the cheek.

MIRANDA

It's so good to see you. You're out now?

MARY

Yes, I got out a week before Christmas.

MIRANDA

That's good. I remember how sad it was that you joined right before Christmas.

LATER:

"Dick Clark's Rockin Eve 2020" is on the television set. There are about a dozen guests of mixed ethnicity.

Mary is talking with her cousin JAMES, 24, and her uncle JOSHUA, 40 at the table. UNCLE JOE, 70, sits alone on a couch. He is within hearing range of Mary's voice.

CONT'D

MARY

There was that one time.

EXT: A MILITARY COMPOUND IN AFGHANISTAN - DAY

SUPER: "Afghanistan 2019"

Captain Mary Murphy is waking inside the compound. She is armed with an M16A4 and a Beretta M9.

Some Afghan soldiers and an American soldier are guarding the compound's entrance.

One Afghan Soldier shoots the other soldiers.

The Afghan soldier fires inside the compound as he runs towards a parked vehicle.

Captain Murphy unshoulders her rifle.

The Afghan soldier notices Captain Murphy.

Captain Murphy and the Afghan soldier exchange shots. Her first rounds strike the Afghan's body armor. The Afghan reaches the vehicle as one of Murphy's rounds hit his neck.

Another of her rounds hit his face.

The Afghan falls dead.

INT: THE MURPHY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

JAMES

That must have been frightening.

MARY

It was. It was even more frightening after the fact when I had time to think about it.

JOSHUA

Hey, you're a war hero.

MARY

I guess my Silver Star and citation says so.

CONT'D

Uncle Joe sits on the couch. He has a sad look.

EXT: A BASE PERIMETER - NIGHT

SUPER: "South Vietnam 1969"

Airman First Class JOSEPH ROSSI, 19, and his working dog MIKE patrol the base perimeter.

Mike ALERTS!

Rossi scans the perimeter.

Sappers are inside the razor wire. They have almost completed making a pathway through the razor wire.

Rossi aims and opens fire with his rifle.

The underbrush at the edge of the "kill zone" comes alive with GUNFIRE.

Rossi drops to the ground and continues firing until his magazine is empty.

A sapper emerges from the razor wire.

Mike lunges onto the sapper. The sapper SCREAMS as Mike bites into him.

Rossi locks another magazine into his rifle and resumes firing.

There is a nearby EXPLOSION.

Rossi feels an intense pain in his torso.

Rossi continues firing until his magazine is empty.

A North Vietnamese soldier takes aim at Rossi.

Mike jumps on the soldier.

Rossi struggles through the pain as he locks another magazine into his rifle.

There is SCREAMING and SHOUTING in Vietnamese.

Rossi fires two rounds then loses consciousness.

Rossi regains consciousness.

CONT'D

There are explosions and gunfire.

Men are SHOUTING in English.

Rossi loses consciousness.

An AIRMAN reaches Rossi.

AIRMAN

He's still alive!

Rossi regains consciousness and is being carried on a stretcher.

He loses consciousness.

INT: AN AMBULANCE - NIGHT

The ambulance rumbling at high speed wakes Rossi. A med tech is tending to him.

He loses consciousness.

INT: A HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Rossi regains consciousness. He is on a gurney. Hospital personnel whisk him down the corridor.

He loses consciousness.

INT: A HOSPITAL ICU - DAY

Rossi regains consciousness. A CHEERFUL MED TECH, a man about 25, comes to Rossi's gurney.

CHEERFUL MED TECH

Hey Joltin' Joe! How are you feeling?

JOSEPH ROSSI

How's Mike?

CHEERFUL MED TECH

(Hesitates)

I'll get the nurse.

CONT'D

MEMORY SEQUENCE:

An old movie set in World War II. A man is on a bed in a military hospital ward. A gorgeous nurse comes to his bedside.

END SEQUENCE:

A SECOND LIEUTENANT TIM TAYLOR, early 20's, comes to Rossi's bedside.

SECOND LIEUTENANT TIM TAYLOR

I'm nurse Taylor. What is Mike's last name?

JOSEPH ROSSI

Mike is my working dog. He saved my life.

INT: A HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Rossi is lying in bed. SGT SHAW, A1C RILEY, and A1C HANSEN come to Rossi's bedside.

A1C HANSEN

How you feeling?

JOSEPH ROSSI

How's Mike?

A1C RILEY

Sorry, Mike is dead.

Rossi turns despondent.

JOSEPH ROSSI

He saved me.

SGT SHAW

Mike and you saved us all. Mike killed three of them before he bought it. We found another Charley, badly chewed up, outside the wire.



CONT'D

A1C RILEY

We're so glad you're alive.

A1C HANSEN

We're all lucky to be alive thanks to you.

INT: A C-9 NIGHTINGALE - DAY

Airman First Class Rossi is on a litter. The plane is filled with litter patients.

The C-9 RUMBLES down the runway then takes flight.

There is the sound of the LANDING GEAR RETRACTING.

PATIENT

Good-Bye Vietnam.

INT: A C-141 STARLIFTER - DAY

Passengers are boarding.

There is an elderly man in civilian clothes.

There are two women, about 30, in civilian clothes. One woman has two children with her and the other woman has three children with her.

The other passengers, mostly Army, are in uniform.

Rossi is seated.

Rossi sees a Marine on crutches who has lost a leg.

Rossi sees a soldier who has a prosthetic arm.

Rossi looks at his own legs and arms.

INT: A COMMERCIAL JETLINER - DAY - TRACKING

Rossi and the other passengers are exiting the aircraft. There are a few other people in military uniforms on the flight. A couple of other military age men are clean shaven and have military style haircuts.

INT: AN AIRLINE TERMINAL - DAY

Joe Rossi enters the terminal from the jetway.

CONT'D

Joe Rossi and his parents spot each other.

JOE'S MOTHER

Joey!

Joe's Mother gives him a long hug.

JOE'S FATHER gives him a long hug. Joe is tolerant of his father's hug.

INT: A SEDAN - DAY - DRIVING

Joe's Father is driving. Joe's Mother is in the passenger seat. Joe is in the back.

JOE

I'll be there while they take care of the paperwork to process me out.

JOE'S FATHER

That's the military. Hurry up and wait.

JOE'S MOTHER

I'm so glad you're going to be out.

The car pulls up to the driveway. There is a sign on the door "Welcome Home Joey!".

INT: THE FRONT DOOR - DAY - TRACKING

Joe's Father opens the door. He and Joe's Mother look troubled.

Joe is jubilant.

Joe steps inside.

JOE

Rex! Rex!

JOE'S MOTHER

Rex died a few months ago.

Joe turns despondent.

CONT'D

JOE'S MOTHER CONT'D

We didn't want to tell you while you were away.

JOE'S FATHER

We'll pick out another dog.

JOE

No. I don't want another dog, ever.

INT: A SMALL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Airman First Class Rossi is at attention in the front of the auditorium and facing a LIEUTENANT COLONEL. A FIRST SERGEANT reads a citation.

FIRST SERGEANT

... By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Airman Rossi has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

The Lieutenant Colonel hangs a Silver Star on Rossi's uniform.

INT: AN OFFICE - DAY

A radio is playing top 40 music.

Rossi and a couple of other Air Force people pile into the office. Rossi has the Silver Star box and citation folder in his hand.

There are a few soldiers and sailors working in the office.

PETTY OFFICER THIRD CLASS glances at the airmen.

PETTY OFFICER THIRD CLASS

Hey Rossi, they gave you a medal?

ROSSI

(Matter of fact)

Yea.

CONT'D

PETTY OFFICER THIRD CLASS

Let's have a look at it.

Rossi hands Petty Officer Third Class the box.

Petty Officer Third Class opens the box and nods.

PETTY OFFICER THIRD CLASS

Impressive. Maybe you should show this to the new recruits?

SPECIALIST 7 walks over glances at the medal.

SPECIALIST 7

It would be better to tell them what you gave rather than what you got.

(Beat)

Congratulations Rossi.

INT: A CLASSROOM - DAY

Most of the desks have men in their late teens and early 20s sitting in them. They have casual civilian clothes and long hair. Each of them has some papers on their desk.

Rossi is behind the podium at the front. He is holding some papers in his hands.

ROSSI

I can't stay in even if I wanted to. I left a lot of my guts in Vietnam.

INT: AN OFFICE - DAY

Rossi is standing at a counter. An airman ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST is at a typewriter behind the counter.

There is a "Dependent" identity card in the typewriter.

The letters "DAV" are typed onto the card.

The airman takes the card out of the typewriter and puts it and a pen in front of Rossi

CONT'D

ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST

Check everything over and sign here.

INT: THE FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

LIVING ROOM

There is a party in progress. There is a sign on the wall that reads "Happy New Year 1970". There is a 25" color television set that is showing Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians. There is a real Christmas tree in the corner. It is dried up. A few middle-age people are dancing.

DINING ROOM

There is a table in the dining room with trays half filled with food.

Joe is sitting with his UNCLE TOM, 50, UNCLE DICK, 51, and UNCLE HARRY, 53, at the middle of the table. The uncles are drinking scotch and smoking Marlboro cigarettes. GRANDPA ROSSI, 73, is at the end of the table. He is smoking an unfiltered Camel cigarette.

LIVING ROOM

EUGENE, 15, DAVE, 16, and AL, 16, are nursing beers.

EUGENE

You know Eric Odegard?

DAVE

Yea, he's in my typing class.

AL

The big Swedish guy who played on the basketball team until he got injured.

EUGENE

Actually, he's Norwegian. Anyway, that knee injury he could have gotten it fixed but he decided not to so he could get out of the draft.

AL

I heard if you drink wine the night before  
the physical it'll make your blood  
pressure go up.

DAVE

Another way is to try to fail the hearing  
test.

DAVE

The problem with that is it's too easy to  
trip yourself up then they'll know you're  
faking.

EUGENE

The best way is going to college. By the  
time you graduate the war will be over.

AL

Not with your grades Eugene.

They all laugh.

The Royal Canadians strike up a Polka. A few middle age  
couples dance to the music.

DAVE

What is with this music? It's going to be  
1970, not 1940.

DINING ROOM

UNCLE TOM

I missed the D-Day invasion. I was in the  
invasion of Southern France. I jumped  
over a log. Then reached a sand dune.

(Beat)

Bang! There was an explosion behind me I  
looked back. Another guy jumped over the  
same log and landed on a land mine.

CONT'D

UNCLE DICK

It's mostly just luck. When I was in The Philippines there was an artillery barrage. Me and a couple of other guys were in this ditch.

(Beat)

When the barrage ended and we came out of the ditch. There was this biggest shell I'd ever seen right at the end of the ditch.

UNCLE HARRY

A dud?

UNCLE DICK

Yea.

UNCLE HARRY

That is lucky.

UNCLE TOM

You were in The Bulge, weren't you Harry?

UNCLE HARRY

Yea, on Christmas they gave us a nice turkey dinner.

UNCLE DICK

That's one thing about the Army you always get a Thanksgiving and Christmas Dinner.

UNCLE HARRY

Yea, they also gave us a present. After dinner they loaded us on a truck and took us somewhere.

(Beat)

They wouldn't tell us where. We had no idea where we were.

(Beat)

The Germans knew where we were. I can still here those Screaming Mimies.

The Uncles LAUGH. Joe gives a forced smile.

LIVING ROOM

The Royal Canadians strike up a "Tarantella". The older people and children dance to it.

DAVE

I don't believe we're listening to this.

AL

This is so hokey.

DINING ROOM

UNCLE TOM

So, this is going to be your first year back in civilian life.

JOE

Yea.

UNCLE DICK

Have you joined the VFW?

JOE

Na.

UNCLE DICK

You should join.

JOE

I don't think so.

UNCLE DICK

Why not you should?

Joe answers in an unconvincing tone.



JOE

Ok, I'll think about it.

UNCLE DICK

You do that.

Grandpa Rossi sits at the end of the table and smokes his cigarettes.

EXT: WWI ITALIAN FRONT TRENCH LINE - DAY

Super: "The Italian Front 1917"

There is an artillery barrage.

INT: BUNKER - DAY

Italian soldiers, including PRIVATE GIOVANNI ROSSI, are hunkered down. There is the RUMBLE of exploding artillery shells. Dirt periodically drops from the ceiling.

The barrage stops.

The LIEUTENANT, 22, stands.

LIEUTENANT

(Yells)

Everybody out!

The men scramble out of the bunker.

EXT: TRENCH - DAY

There is machinegun fire. The soldiers are firing their rifles.

EXT: NO MAN'S LAND - DAY

Waves of Austrian Soldiers advance.

Many soldiers fall but the waves continue.

EXT: TRENCH - DAY

A RUNNER hands the LIEUTENANT a note.

LIEUTENANT

(Yells)

Withdraw! Withdraw! Withdraw!

The soldiers rush from the firing line.

EXT: ANOTHER TRENCH - DAY

Rossi reaches the trench and takes a firing position.

Some soldiers are holding a firing position. Other soldiers keep running.

LIEUTENANT

(Yells)

Hold this position!

Rossi takes a glance to the side.

There is an unmanned machinegun.

Rossi rushes towards the machinegun.

The Lieutenant notices Rossi.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

(Yells)

Hey where are you going!

Rossi reaches the machinegun.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

Good.

The Lieutenant grabs another soldier and points at the machinegun position.

Rossi's machinegun BURPS to life.

Soldiers on the firing line open fire.

EXT: NO MAN'S LAND

Some Austrian soldiers fall.

The Austrians retreat.

EXT: WWI BARRACKS AREA - NIGHT

Rossi slowly approaches a barracks. He reaches then enters the barracks.

INT: A BARRACKS - NIGHT

Rossi is walking towards his bunk. The other men are sitting or lying down.

FIRST SOLDIER

Hey, Rossi. How was your leave?

ROSSI

It was good.

SECOND SOLDIER

Anything that isn't here is good.

The door flings open. The SERGEANT stomps in and makes a quick scan of the bay.

SERGEANT

Rossi, you've got guard duty.

ROSSI

What do you mean, I just got here?

SERGEANT

You are here. I want to see you one guard duty in five minutes.

ROSSI

Five minutes?

SERGEANT

Yes, five minutes!

The SERGEANT abruptly leaves.

Rossi, seemingly unsure which way to turn.

ROSSI

What am I going to do? My gun is locked in the armory.

The Second Soldier grabs a rifle and takes it to Rossi.

SECOND SOLDIER

Here, take mine.

EXT: AN INDISTINCT AREA - NIGHT

Rossi is standing guard.

There is a dull noise.

Rossi raises his rifle to his eye.

ROSSI

Who goes there!

The gun goes off.

Rossi drops the gun and grabs his face.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

Mannaggia diavolo!

He drops to the ground and squirms.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

Mamma Mia!

There are the sounds of men running and shouting in the distance.

INT: COMMANDER'S OFFICE - DAY

Rossi, with a bandage on his face, stands before the FIRST CAPTAIN, who is seated behind his desk.

The Lieutenant is seated.

FIRST CAPTAIN

You have a self-inflicted wound. You were standing guard duty with another soldier's rifle.

(Pause)

A self-inflicted wound is a court martial offense. You could be executed for this.

CONT'D

LIEUTENANT

Private Rossi is a good soldier. He never gives any trouble when given an order. He has never hesitated when ordered into battle.

(Beat)

The rifle was dirty. Such accidents have happened before.

FIRST CAPTAIN

Very well, but I don't want to hear of any other accidents.

EXT: RAILROAD STATION SOUTHERN ITALY - DAY

Super: "Italy 1919"

A train rolls into a station. It rolls to a stop. Some people are waiting at the station. This includes a WOMAN WITH FOUR CHILDREN, ranging in age from 2 to 8.

A small mix of soldiers and civilians step off the train. The woman with the children spots her HUSBAND, a man in a soldier's uniform. The THREE OLDEST CHILDREN run to the HUSBAND.

THREE OLDEST CHILDREN

Papa! Papa!

The husband picks up the youngest of the tree. The other two children hug their father.

The woman, with her youngest child in her arms, joyfully hugs her husband.

A YOUNG WIFE and her HUSBAND IN UNIFORM rush into each other's arms. They embrace and kiss.

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN and a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN hug a YOUNG SOLDIER.

Rossi, his bag over his shoulder, walks alone on the platform.

EXT: A DIRT ROAD - DAY

Rossi, in uniform with his bag over his shoulder, slowly walks down the side of a country road.

There is the HOOF and WHEEL sound of a horse drawn cart. The sound gradually gets louder. As the cart nears Rossi glances back at it.

The MAN DRIVING CART, about 50, recognizes Giovanni Rossi.

MAN DRIVING CART

Hey Giovanni!

The man pulls on the reins and stops the cart.

MAN DRIVING CART (CONT'D)

Giovanni, you're back! Get on!

Rossi smiles and trots to the side of the cart. The man helps Rossi get the bag onto the cart. Then Rossi enthusiastically climbs on the cart.

MAN DRIVING CART (CONT'D)

Giovanni, it's so good you're back!

(Pause)

You back for good?

ROSSI

Yes, I'm back for good.

MAN DRIVING CART

You don't have to go back?

ROSSI

No, I'm out of the army.

MAN DRIVING CART

That's good you're Mama and Papa are going to be so happy to have you back.

(Pause)

CONT'D

MAN DRIVING CART (CONT'D)

I'm sure they would have met you at the station if they knew what time it was coming. These trains, they never run on time.

INT: A ROOM IN A SMALL HOUSE - NIGHT

Super: "New York 1919"

There are a bunch of adults sitting around a table in a dimly lit room.

They are speaking Italian as they drink liquor, smoke cigarettes, and nibble at the food on the table.

Giovanni is the youngest person at the table. The oldest person appears to be in the mid-30s.

The grandfather clock in the corner gives the time as three minutes to twelve.

GIOVANNI'S COUSIN, mid-20s, pours anisette into a glass. He stands and raises his glass.

GIOVANNI'S COUSIN

This is Giovanni's first year that he is going to begin in America. Salute!

INT: THE MURPHY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Everyone is gathered around the television. Some guests are holding noise makers or poppers.

ON SCREEN:

The "Ball" in Times Square is dropping.

OFF SCREEN:

PARTY GUESTS

Ten, Nine, Eight

INT: THE FAMILY HOME, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone is gathered around the television. Some guests are holding noise makers, some are holding poppers, some are holding horns. Joe's parents are holding pots and ladles.

ON SCREEN:

Guy Lombardo is looking at his watch.

GUY LOMBARDO

Seven, Six, Five

OFF SCREEN:

INT: A ROOM IN A SMALL HOUSE - NIGHT

Everyone fills a glass with liquor.

INT: THE MURPHY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

PARTY GUESTS

Three! Two! One! Happy New Year!

ON SCREEN:

Screen shows 2020

OFF SCREEN:

Guests POP poppers, make NOISE with their noise makers, or CHEER and APPLAUSE.

O.S. There is the sound of FIRECRACKERS outside.

INT: THE FAMILY HOME, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Guests with poppers, POP them. Joe's parents BANG their pots with the ladles. Other guests make NOISE with their noise makers or blow their HORNS.

Joe's parents continue to BANG their pots as they lead the guests outside.

EXT: THE FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

There is a heavy snow falling.

Joe's parents BANG their pots as they exit the house.



CONT'D

The other guests follow them.

JOE'S MOTHER

It's cold, and the snow!

JOE'S FATHER

Maybe this isn't such a good idea?

Joe's parents hurry inside the house.

The other guests go back inside as the cold gets to them.

INT: THE FAMILY HOME, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Joe's mother is rubbing her arms.

JOE'S MOTHER

Baby it's cold outside!

INT: THE MURPHY'S BASEMENT - FRONT DOOR

The party is winding down.

Uncle Joe is leaving. He WAVES to the remaining guests.

UNCLE JOE

Good-bye and have a happy new year!

Uncle Joe gives Mary a HUG and she gives him a FAUX KISS on the cheek.

Uncle Joe looks into Mary's eyes.

UNCLE JOE

You have a lot of benefits coming to you.  
Make sure you get everything you've got  
coming to you.

MARY

I will Uncle Joe. Thank you.

EXT: THE FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

The party is winding down.

Grandpa and GRANDMA ROSSI are leaving with their DAUGHTER and Uncle Tom, their son-in-law.

Grandpa and Grandma Rossi exchange HUGS and KISSES with the guests.

When they try to hug Dave, he backs away.

Grandpa and Grandma Rossi hug and kiss Joe's Father.

Grandpa Rossi HUGS Joe. Joe is uncomfortable but successfully resists the urge to back away. Grandpa Rossi KISSES Joe. Joe forces a SMILE.

GRANDPA ROSSI

(Thick Italian Accent)

Glad you are back home.

(Pause)

You did the right thing.

Joe's forced SMILE changes to a sincere SMILE.

JOE

Thank you, Grandpa. Thank you very much.

INT: A ROOM IN A SMALL HOUSE - NIGHT

The grandfather clock CHIMES. It's midnight.

Everyone stands around the table. They each have a full shot glass in their hand.

GIOVANNI'S COUSIN

Cento anni!

EVERYONE ELSE

Cento anni!

They all take a drink.

FADE OUT:

THE END