

It's a cold December night, a week before Christmas. Smash! Glass breaks as Ray threw a family picture across the room into a wall. "What the Fuck! How could she do this?" he shouts at the top of his lungs. Ray has been walking back and forth into the bedroom for five minutes now. His face turns red with disgust and anger each time he enters the bedroom and stares at his laptop. In a few minutes, Nicole, Ray's fiancé, will be coming home with his son and step son. He needed to decide whether to forgive and forget, or to confront her about the issue. However, three days ago was a different story, but he is irrational now and grabs his handgun instead.

Three days ago, Ray felt a great sense of accomplishment. Christmas was right around the corner and the couple weren't behind on bills this year. This year the couple finally have money saved to have all the Christmas presents that the kids over wanted. This is a good year as Ray now owns a house with white picket fence, three cars, two dogs, a cat, with a beautiful family. His career is wonderful and feels like a blessing because he was the "go to man," as his coworker calls him. After two years of unemployment and finding part time jobs to support his family after the war, he was finally out of the rat race, stable, and was living the American dream. The past couple of years with Nicole was a struggle but he thought he was invincible with Nicole by my side. In a few months we were finally getting married.

Nicole is Ray's pride and joy as he talks about her to all his coworkers and friends. She has been there during the toughest part of his life. Blonde hair, blue eyes, five feet and three inches tall, Ray thought Nicole was that hometown beautiful cheerleader that everyone watched and cheered with during the high school homecoming football games. Ray met Nicole

his way to Iraq and spent his time off with her everyday after all military training was done. He thought it would be a great idea to bring her along the journey of becoming a girlfriend while on combat deployment. On his way to Iraq he also remembered one of the most romantic times was when Ray and Nicole rushed and bi-passed all types of security checkpoints at the Philadelphia International Airport. Everyone felt sorry for the young couple, as two lovers are soon to be split by war. The lady that checked them into the airport was crying because she lost a son during this war, so they decided to break protocol and allow Nicole to wait with Ray all the way through the departure time at the airport. However, the struggle then begins in Iraq as their relationship was tested. Ray made Nicole go through hell as it was rough to be in a relationship with a soldier. The couple even had a miscarriage because of the stress of the military life induces. There were even times where she saw Ray getting attacked with mortars while He was in the headquarters building talking to her on skype. She can saw everyone in the room getting scared as the mortars fell, and hearts sank while Ray and the other soldiers take cover and felt helpless while the explosion went off. Nicole took care of Ray on his worst times when he came back from Iraq and was stuck in a hospital recovering from a traumatic brain injury. It was a three to four-hour drive from Pennsylvania to Ft. Belvoir, Virginia along with her job and managing her son. But she didn't care as long as she was by his side she was happy. Ray loved this girl and when Christmas came around after the war. He left a three-big diamond ring on top of the Christmas tree and proposed. Christmas was wonderful time for them and the family was finally reunited.

As the car pulled into the driveway, Ray raced to the front door with his gun. He holstered his gun putting it into his belt below his lower back. Becoming more enraged and

furious the door slowly creaks open. As the door slowly opens Ray's face begins to turn red and feels with a sense of disgust. Suddenly two baby feet slowly waddles into the house. "He's walking now?" Ray whispered with confusion. It was Dominic, his three-year-old son and was finally taking baby steps. Ray watched in amazement as Dominic walks towards him. As Dominic waddles, he starts to lose balance and trips over his own foot. Ray quickly scoops and saves him before hitting the ground. Lost in the moment, Ray smiled with tears in his eyes, and the two bonded father and son, his son smiling back. When Nicole walked in the house Ray stared at her but felt numb. The sex videos and photos that she had an affair with another man did not matter. His anger towards her diminishes. Right now, the only thing that mattered was his son. Dominic was a smaller version of Ray. Ray then remembered that this was the age when he lost his father. He begins to remember and wonder what it was like to grow up fatherless and constantly looking for a father figure. He got up slowly to confront Nicole about the issue, but instead he said, "What's for dinner?"