

THINGS I WISH I TOLD YOU BEFORE

Written by

Phil Northman

Northman Productions LLC  
Philnorthman@gmail.com

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

Crowds in Times Square go about their business. Throngs of people walk with a purpose, trying to avoid excited tourists.

PHIL (V.O.)

In the United States, there are 43 thousand suicides every year. That's 117 per day. Another 500 thousand people will visit ERs following an attempt.

(beat)

Suicide is the ultimate choice one can make. And it's not just from depression or sadness. There are countless reasons why people from all walks of life, from all circumstances, suddenly find themselves contemplating that choice.

EXT. VETERAN MEMORIAL PARK, WEST NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY - NIGHT

A man observes the skyline of Manhattan in all its glory viewed from a park off Boulevard JFK-East.

PHIL (V.O.)

One night, my brother was one of those people that faced that choice.

EXT. LEDGE OF PALISADES CLIFF - NIGHT

The morning is dark, obscured by clouds. ERICH, seventeen, nerdy, thin but handsome with adult facial features, stands on the ledge of a high cliff. He has been out all night. He looks down: a steep drop. He contemplates his choice.

PHIL, a well-dressed, fit, late-twenties man, appears behind Erich. Phil resembles Erich, as they are brothers, and gets distraught when he realizes the gravity of Erich's decision. Erich cannot hear or see him.

PHIL

I wish I could have told you not to do it. I wish I could have told you that I care. I wish that I would have been here... if I knew.

Erich takes his phone out and rereads the message that Jamie sent him earlier. It says "sry you found out like that - bye". Erich starts a new message and types "I love".

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT

A rewinding time-lapse begins. The skyline of New York City, seen from New Jersey, sparkles with a myriad lights from the buildings. Suddenly, the sun appears from the West where it normally sets and the buildings' lights gradually turn off.

The sun rapidly traverses the sky in the reverse of its usual trajectory. The sun moves towards the East and sets where it normally rises from. The buildings turn their lights on again as the sun departs. The light of the sun reappears in the West... This cycle accelerates and repeats several times.

INT. ERICH'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

STEPHANIE, an adorable, athletic teenager of Erich's age sits on the couch in a stylish, modern living room. She reads a fashion magazine.

Erich sneaks up and scares her by touching her head.

STEPHANIE  
(playfully)  
Ahhh! Stop that!

Stephanie hits him with the magazine. Erich grabs the magazine and jumps next to her. They embrace. They laugh in unison, displaying an obvious high level of comfort with each other. She points at a page in the magazine.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)  
I want to get that dress for prom.

ERICH  
Let me see it. I'm your fashion expert. Oh, cute!

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - DAY

A rewinding time-lapse begins again. Similar to the previous one, this time-lapse "rewinds" several days back.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A beautiful contemporary kitchen, with decorations that reflect the owners' family bliss and happiness. Erich sits at the table working on his laptop.

Erich's MOM, an elegant blonde woman in her mid-forties enters.

MOM

You're going to be late for school.

Erich rapidly closes his laptop and puts his things in a geeky backpack. He gets up and is intercepted by his mom. She adoringly kisses him as he tries to exit.

MOM (CONT'D)

Love you!

ERICH

Love you too mom.

EXT. LEDGE OF PALISADES CLIFF - NIGHT

Erich stares out in the distance.

INT. HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Erich gets ready to go out. JAMIE, a confident, well-dressed early twenties man, enters. He looks at Erich. Erich turns.

ERICH

So that's it, uh?

JAMIE

I thought you knew.

Nonchalant and almost annoyed, Jamie turns and leaves.

EXT. LEDGE OF PALISADES CLIFF - NIGHT

Erich looks back at his phone. He finishes his "I love you" text. He addresses it to Mom, hits send, then puts it away.

PHIL

I'll never pretend I knew what was on your mind. What made you decide -

Erich jumps. Phil cannot bear to watch.

PHIL (CONT'D)

(whispering)

I love you.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT

A forwarding time-lapse begins. This one will begin at night and run a day and a half.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The contemporary living room is filled with people in a somber mood. DAD comforts mom while both sit on the couch. Stephanie is flanked by TWO FRIENDS, all worried. Jamie sits in a chair. Something is clearly on his mind.

Phil, troubled, has a phone to his hear and lowers it.

PHIL

Erich's dead. They found his body.

Phil, powerless, stares at Mom. The news hits everyone hard. Mom buries her head in dad's embrace. Dad is shocked but shows strength for Mom.

MOM

(muffled scream)

Nooooo!

Stephanie is stunned and dazed. Her friends look at her, helpless, unsure what to say as she reacts to the shock. Jamie displays a mix of shock and worry.

EXT. WEEHAWKEN PARK - DAY

It is cloudy and the park is quiet. Phil passionately looks into the camera with the Manhattan skyline behind him near the spot where Erich jumped.

PHIL

Before you take that permanent approach to temporary problems, you gotta know the one real truth about that decision: if you decide to take your own life, the people you'll hurt, really hurt, are the people you care about. The people that you love.

(beat)

The people that love you.

(beat)

Be there for them.

"Be there for them" appears on the screen. Followed by "you never know what a person is going through... that phone call could be the difference"