**BEST MAN SPEECH**

**FOR**

**DUSTIN MARTORANO**

Hi, I’m Dustin Martorano, Mike’s best man and close friend since we’ve been kids. There’s so much I want to say about Mike. Our history of friendship and adventure would fill several volumes...so I’ve searched my soul and wracked my brain and did my darnedest (**Can you say damnedest?**) to speak... from my heart... to find the words to express the bond I have with this person who means so much to me.... A person that has been fun, supportive, fiercely loyal, driven, determined.... oh. Wait. Did I mention competitive? **YEP**. For years we’ve had a friendship based on challenges. Over the years I’ve realized that this streak within Mike has served to make us both better, responsive, alert, aware men..... and tonight, oddly enough, **PROVES** the theory I’ve had all along... **FINALLY**, after all these years, it’s **been verified and confirmed**... **I. AM. THE BEST MAN**!! (**Wait for the laugh**)... hey Mike... **GOTCHA**!!

Of course, I have a few things to say about the happy couple, but first I want to acknowledge the individuals mainly responsible for us being here tonight.  To Joanna’s parents, Mr and Mrs. Kierkowszka, thank you for raising such an amazing daughter, sister, wife, mother and **friend**.  When Mike first told me about Joanna, it was clear that she was and **IS, IT** for him, and I can understand why. To Mike’s mom, Linda, you know how I feel about you... you’ve given me my best friend and although life threw some major curve balls your way, you raised a great son.... you led by example... you proved to be the heart and soul and guts of your family, and now you get to share the joy in new beginnings and making new, happy memories. To Mike’s late father, Edward Morgret, who I’m pretty sure is watching over us right now, just like he did in life, knowing he was there, guiding us, teaching us, shaking his head at us... he never ceased to teach us to be better, stronger, more dependable grown men. Mike is who he is today because of the love he got from his father. We are all blessed that his memory lives on in his son. Cheers to the parents of our newly-minted couple!

For those of you who may not know, Mike had the honor of being the best man at my wedding a year and a half ago.  His speech was **GREAT**. He must have taken **months** crafting it and composing **JUST THE RIGHT** sentiment... at once heartwarmingly emotional, yet devilishly funny. It made the whole room laugh one moment, then brought tears to their eyes the next... including mine. My wife and I agreed it was the most beautiful wedding speech we’ve ever heard. Unfortunately Mike, I'm a married man, so I **JUST DON’T** have the time to do **ALL THAT.**.... **SOOOO** ... (**Do you want to bring out a 5 pound bag of onions or a canister labeled “TEAR GAS” and say**)..... I thought I would go to **plan B**... who wants to start chopping (**or for the tear gas you can say... who’s first????**) (**And wait for the laugh**)

But seriously, today is very special for all of us and it’s an honor for me to be here speaking tonight on behalf of Mike and Joanna.  Truthfully, I was nervous about having to get up and speak. ... not because I have a fear of public speaking or anything like that but because I feared that I wouldn’t do a job befitting the love and admiration my wife, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I have for these two.

Who would have ever guessed, **THIRTY YEARS AGO**, that we’d wind up **HERE**? Mike and I have been friends for **THAT** long. Back then, we spent the vast majority of our time hanging out with the other kids in our neighborhood, playing sports and video games, riding our bikes, playing ghost in the graveyard and of course getting into our fair share of trouble.  What about the time Mike broke one of my mom’s kitchen cabinets, superglued it together, and let my brother Dion take the fall for it?  Oops, sorry Dion!  Uh, Joanna... maybe make a little mental note... when it comes to home improvement... hire a **PROFESSIONAL**!!! Remember ... **RESALE VALUE**!! (**Wait for the laugh**)... Or that time we built a tree house...on somebody else’s property.  Remember how that ended Mike?  I do.  Long story short, while taking it down, Mike kicked one of the steps into my face, knocking all of my front teeth backwards.  If it weren’t for my braces, I’d be **GUMMING** my Champagne tonight...  **WAY TO GO**, buddy!

Look, we all know Mike’s a great guy, but we’ve had our fair share of differences... people tend to warn... “Don’t go into business with a friend...” but we were cocky... we were determined... we were **EIGHT**... and that lemonade wasn’t about to sell itself. While we were both passionate about the product... and the market, our pricing strategies were a world apart. We didn’t realize it at the time, but our chosen selection of conflict resolution was just that... **CONFLICT**! Let’s just say, I left quite an impression on my ex-partner... it was the size of a baseball and it was right in the middle of his chest... and STILL... it was small compensation for the ladder incident...

There’s an expression that teaches us, “That which doesn’t kill you makes you stronger...” it’s obvious that through the years Mike and I have gotten stronger both because of, and in spite of each other. We’ve each encouraged the other to up the ante... raise the stakes... and go for the thing that resonates deep inside our gut. He’s one of the smartest, most driven, and most intuitive people I’ve ever known... and not to digress, he’s got more nicknames than my long list of positive attributes... and whether he answers to Bump, Magic Mike, **THE ONE**... you name it, he’s **STILL** Mike... oh. And he’s a risk taker... he tends to go “off road” and doesn’t necessarily take the easy way. I will never forget when he he was in college, studying biochemistry. He was in the Doctorate program at U of I, and he had a **feeling**... he wanted to start his own real estate company, American Dreamscapers. Most people would not have had that vision... most friends would play devil’s advocate and discourage that kind of “180” life decision, but Mike believed and I believed in Mike.... and here we are... and I’m **STILL** waiting for **my cut.**.. (**Wait for the laugh**). Um... By the way... That **SAME** vision... that **SAME** determination to take the “road less traveled” has **ALSO** found our friend... driving on a golf course... at **TWO AM**... and winding up in the pond... but that story is for the **AFTER PARTY**!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

I will never forget the day Mike called... and told me about Joanna. And **THIS TIME**, he sounded different. They had been dating a short while and he told me in a rather matter of fact manner, that **SHE** was **THE ONE**. I had **NEVER** heard that from him before, but the first time I met her, I understood why he felt the way he did. Joanna is everything Mike could have ever wished for in a wife... she’s beautiful... and even more so today.... smart, caring, nurturing... supportive... and **BOY**!! Can she cook!!! Show of hands... Have you ever had her pierogies?? **MY GOD**!!! Sublime!!! Mike and Joanna have had their share of impossible, tragic challenges, and they’ve survived... **TOGETHER**. They have handled those tragedies with strength and grace and I cannot imagine two people more deserving of a lifetime together filled only with good, happy, positive moments. It’s a real blessing to have a friend like Mike... one who knows me, warts and all.... don’t worry... it’s just an expression!!! (**Wait for the laugh)** and **STILL** honors me by asking me to be their son, Charlie’s (?) godfather. I **CANNOT** express how much that meant and **STILL** means to me.

I’d like to offer a quick prayer... please bow your heads while we pray, “ Dear Heavenly Father, we ask that you bless this union between Joanna and Mike and that it be your will to continue to show them favor... Please keep them safe, healthy, happy, and prosperous, and most importantly, please guide their hand as they raise Charlie in your image...Amen.”

A French philosopher once said, “A happy marriage is a long conversation that always seems to short...” with that, I’d like to invite you all to raise a glass as I propose a toast...

To Joanna and Mike... Here’s to a lifetime of conversation... constantly supportive... always engaging... never ending... May the two of you... and Charlie... live together in health and happiness, and have more than you might ever wish for. Congratulations!! We love you!