**EULOGY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**BRIAN YAROLEM**

**REVISED (From Lisa... it looks like Jerry is traveling? His draft is revised/included... also concerned this is longer than 5 minutes).**

Hello everyone. Today we’ve gathered together to mourn the loss, yet honor the life, of our **brother**... Jeff. We believe it’s true that we can gauge the measure of a man by the footprint he leaves on this earth and in our hearts. (**If you want to make a little joke you can say**)... We’re not sure that Jeff’s feet would have left... **literally**... a **huge** impression.... we’ll check... **PROMISE**!!! (**Wait for the laugh**) but his spirit... his love for his family.... for all of us.... his enthusiasm... his appreciation for life and all of its blessings, have left a massive, indelible mark on so many people.

Throughout his life.... and to the very end, Jeff was a **warrior** (**Do you want to add**)... and trust me when I tell you.... my husband, Brian, can identify one when he sees one... (**Wait for the laugh if appropriate**). From the earliest moments we can remember, as kids, to his six year battle with cancer, he showed us how to live and how to love, and he even provided the background music.

We want to thank Jeff for being a great role model... he led by example... as a proud son, a devoted husband, a loving father, a caring and protective....(**Do you want to add**) sometimes **annoying** brother.... oh well, can’t have everything... a dedicated friend, colleague, co-worker, and neighbor. I know he wondered about Brian and the kind of person he **might** be.... and I loved him for that caution... I felt protected. I’m pretty sure he feared that he was some “**interesting** piece of work;” a young Marine that seemed to have no sense of direction, a mystery person that he would have to grin and bear for the sake of me, his sister. I think Brian was afraid too, that he wouldn’t measure up, and that Jeff would think he wasn’t good enough for his family. Throughout dating, I talked about my brother... **a lot**... but hearing about someone and experiencing the reality are never quite the same. Big brothers are usually protective of their sisters, however, there was, admittedly, a palpable relief that prevailed, when, those two met after the first family ‘holiday’ gathering... Jeff the “myth” transformed into Jeff the “man” and two of the most important men in my life fell hard... for each other.... we all observed a “**mutual admiration society**...” one that was open-minded and non-judgmental. From that day, I felt even **more** blessed... if that’s possible, regarding my wonderful, growing family. That feeling has never stopped, nor will it ever. Brian may have fallen in love with me, but having the gift of a brother like Jeff was more than any of us could have wished for.

There comes a moment when one realizes just how blessed they are. We were blessed in love, friendship, and family. We’re so grateful to Jeff for having been such a strong, positive, funny, caring force throughout our lives... he treated friends ... and Brian, as a brother with love and understanding during the ups and downs of our marriage, raising children, surviving deployments, and just “doing life.” Brian and I were grateful to have Jeff videotape our wedding, and we both still laugh when we talk about how he **provoked**... I mean **encouraged** Brian so **enthusiastically** to smear cake on my face at our wedding reception. I always wondered if Jeff even began to realize just how **detailed** make-up touch ups can be... (**Wait for the laugh**)... but you know what? It didn’t matter.... it’s a wonderful and funny memory that brings Jeff back to life, even for a little while. I’m grateful that Brian was welcomed to, and included in, our family ....But most importantly, we’re grateful for Jeff, one of the kindest, most loving, and supportive individuals we will ever have the privilege to know. We are proud to share his DNA and carry his legacy. While we are left with a void that can’t and won’t be filled, love leaves a memory that will endure. I’m pretty sure that Jeff is watching over us right now, giving a thumbs up (**or mention a special gesture that Jeff would do**) as we take our turn and relate these wonderful memories....all inspired by the central figure he so lovingly represented.

(**Jerry’s part... said by Lisa or Brian?)** Our brother Jerry couldn’t be here today, but he wanted us to know that he is waving up to Jeff as he flies at 40,000 feet. He sends his love and appreciation to all of you for being here today to honor our “**brudha man”** Jeff. So many thoughts flash before all of us as we stand in front of you today... Jerry is pretty sure he and Jeff had their moments as kids, but really... what remains are the good times. He says he doesn’t recall the screaming, the fighting, the arguing... Let’s face it... in the end... **Love** is **louder**. It **wins**. Jerry said that as he looks back on our lives as kids and adults, there is not one negative thing he can say about our brother... trust me... God knows he tried to think of something.... but like I said, **love wins**...

Then Jerry thought some more... **typical**... (**Wait for the laugh**) and said **IF** he had **ONE** negative thing to say about Jeff it is that he would never let others **win** ... at **anything...**basketball, Frisbee golf, golf, and especially pinball. You name it...our big brother always won. I remember Jerry would get so mad... he got **so close**...almost had him, and Jeff would smirk and say “No, no no little brother, not today!”

Throughout the last days of Jeff’s life, Jerry tried to write something to express how he felt about his brother. He knew the time was near and wanted to be prepare. When our mom called and said it was over, he wasn’t surprised...somehow he sensed that Jeff would pass on that day.  Jeff knew when he was going to pass and somehow he let Jerry know that everything was going to be alright!

Jerry wants to let everyone know that he loves Jeff...for the brother, the son, the friend, and the man he was. Through it all, he cared for his family. We know Jeff hung on, not for himself, but for us!  Jeff knew we loved him so much and we didn’t want to let him go. In Jerry’s words, “Well brudha man, it is time!  I love you brudha man!  I love you, I love you, I love you!”

There are a thousand stories we can share. The most important thing we can say is that Jeff Russell **LIVED** and we were blessed to be there. There’s a line in a poem that goes, “I am part of all that I have met.” Everyone in this room... everyone who had the privilege to know, love, laugh with, and sing with, Jeff Russell, has a cherished part of him that lives within. His warm personality and infectious laugh were born and bred from our wonderful parents, Phil and Dorothy.... (**Do you want to say**) It was the Kryptonite... the good one... not the red one (**Wait for the laugh**) that drew in Lindy, his loving wife of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years, and it was those same endearing, strong, principled, and dedicated qualities that are alive within their kids, Jarrod, Janna, and Jamie. As we dedicate ourselves to sharing the life, times, and cherished memories of Jeff Russell, his light will continue to guide us.... make us laugh... tell stories... and sing of the mark he left on this earth....

No matter what we go through in life... our time seems too darn short.... A person’s days on earth becomes a blip on a timeline... what was it that Jim Croce sang???

“**But there never seems to be enough time**

**To do the things you want to do once you find them...”**

There never really is enough time... but to honor Jeff, we can do our part to be conscious in our lives... to live with grace...to be present in each moment... to take nothing for granted... to honor those we love and say what needs to be said... and to carry those treasures with us always...

Jeff... until we meet again in Glory... Brian will be waiting and preparing... for you to teach him how to play Frisbee golf... **AMEN**... Thank you all.