**WEDDING SPEECH**

**FOR**

**JOSEPH RUSSO**

Hello everyone… as you might imagine, today marks a very significant moment in the Russo family history. Tonight we celebrate the marriage of our son, Christian, to the love of his life, Diana, and our family grows and looks forward to the future. I’d like to officially welcome Diana to our clan and I also want to congratulate Diana’s family, (**name Diana’s parents and siblings as appropriate**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I’m sure we are all equally eager to share the excitement and joyous moments that evolve from witnessing the happiness these two share.

Weddings are a time for celebration. For a parent, they are also an opportunity to look back and remember what it has been like to be Christian’s father. Fortunately, for all of us, thanks to my son’s unique relationship with life, this is gonna be gooood…. I think of the song, “Sunrise, Sunset”…. Those lyrics start with, “Is this the little boy I carried???” Welllll, for Christoper, it was more like, “Is this the little three year old boy who locked himself in the Ford Expedition while his mother was out shopping and had the only key???” (**wait for the laugh**) The song goes on… “Is this the little boy at play??”… Yeah, well with Christian, play was more like breaking his bed while doing many, **MANY** jumps and flips…. (**If you want, you can say the following and wait for the laugh**)…. I’m not sure, Diana, but I think there might be a little warning somewhere in there for you….

I could go on, but let’s just say, to know Christian is to love him, and we’re so happy that Diana got the memo.

We are very proud of the man that Christian has become. His wild child energy has evolved into being a person who is focused, caring, and committed. Our “Captain Morgan” goes all out to show how he feels and what’s important to him. From his dedication to being the good guy…. Even if it meant getting suspended for flipping a kid over in high school for being a bully… to taking his love of football and working his ass off to become second team all county defense, Christian has always expressed a tremendous appetite for life…. And speaking of “**appetite**,” no… I am **NOT** going to mention how he used to find fascination in eating the neighbors’ pet food out of the dog’s bowl… (**Wait for the laugh**).

Every ounce of Christian…. Every moment of his life… has provided us with stories and lessons on the importance of family. Of course, if you know my son… and if you’re here, with us, I’m gonna guess that’s a given, you know how much his family means to him…. Especially his grandparents, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Christian, I know technically, it doesn’t seem like they’re here, but I want you to know, they are. They live in our memories, in the traditions we carry forth, and in the culture they gave to us, that we share with you, and that hopefully, someday, you and Diana will share with your kids. So many of us here tonight reflect the most important parts of (**use the names Christian used for them**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. They live on in the stories we tell, the history we share, and most importantly, the manicotti we eat tonight, which, I am quite sure, was watched over by Grandma as it was being prepared.

If there were one piece of fatherly advice I would give the two of you as you embark on married life, it would be…. Never lose sight of the person who is by your side. That person is your best friend, your protector, your partner, and **THE ONE** who will nurture and nourish you for the rest of your lives. That being said, I’d like to invite all of you to raise a glass as I propose a toast:

To Diana and Christian, here’s to a life together filled with love and happiness, good health and great fortune, loving family, incredible friends, and more than you might ever wish for…. Oh… and manicotti… **LOTS** of manicotti!!! Congratulations!! We love you!!