

DEAR JOHN
by Nicholas Sparks

Role: John Tyree

Synopsis:

In 2003, John Tyree, a Staff Sergeant in the United States Army Special Forces, is lying on the ground in combat gear with multiple gunshot wounds to his body. Coins begin to fall over him as, in a voiceover; he recalls a childhood trip to the U.S. Mint. He compares himself to a coin in the United States Military, and states that the last thing he thought about before he blacked out was "you".

In 2001, in Charleston, South Carolina, John is on vacation. He meets Savannah, a college student on spring break, when he rescues her purse from the water. Over the course of two weeks, Savannah and John fall in love. Savannah meets John's father, a reclusive man who seems to be obsessed with his coin collection but his genuine interest draws her, to John's surprise. Savannah mentions to John that his father may have high functioning autism.

When John returns to the army, he and Savannah continue their relationship through letters, expecting to build a life together when he leaves the army. But the September 11 attacks make him reconsider the army, and he ultimately chooses to re-enlist. Over the next two years, the romance goes on, through their letters. After a time, John finds himself anxiously awaiting the next letter, but when it arrives it is a Dear John letter, informing him that she has become engaged to someone else. John burns all of Savannah's letters.

Then, despite being wounded and encouraged to return home, John re-enlists. After four more years and many missions, while waiting to receive orders on his unit's next deployment, John is informed that his father had a stroke. When John arrives at the hospital he learns that his father is still alive but in grave condition. John writes a letter to his father, which he reads to him at the hospital; John's voiceover at the beginning of the film was from this letter, in which he told his father that the first thing to cross his mind after he was shot was coins, and the last thing to cross his mind before he lost consciousness was his dad, ultimately the most precious person in his life. Soon afterwards, his father sadly dies.

JOHN:

There's something I want to tell you. After I got shot... you want to know the very first thing that entered my mind? Before I blacked out? Coins. I'm 8 years old again, on a tour of the US Mint. I'm listening to a guy explain how coins are made: how they're punched out of sheet metal, how they're rimmed and beveled, how they are stamped and cleaned. And how each and every batch of coins are personally examined... just in case any of them slip through with the slightest imperfections. That's what popped into my head. I am a coin in the United States Army. I was minted in the year 1980. I've been punched from sheet metal. I've been stamped and cleaned, and my ridges have been rimmed and beveled. And now I have two small holes in me; I'm no longer in perfect condition. So there's something else I want to tell you – right before everything went black, you want to know the very last thing that entered my mind? You.