

# The Pandemic's Christmas Gift. "Ten Dollars in His Pocket"

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Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

*Bleak was something he could easily relate to, especially now. He didn't know which bothered him more, the bitter Detroit December cold, or his jobless situation. When he was going strong, along with the economy, being a massage therapist was great. He made really good bucks and the hours were fine. Working in the mornings and again at night gave him the time he needed for his son. He could pick the kid up at school, walk him home and play a few video games until the boy needed to begin his homework. Now with the pandemic and the school closed, he had to help his son do the required remote learning. The boy's mother was nowhere to be found, except with some new addicted boyfriend living who knows where. Yes, things did look bleak.*

The moratorium on his rent was just about ending, and his unemployment was about to run out as well. The old lady living in the next apartment was too nice, with her free meals for him and his son. How long could that last, with her in a similar boat? He did the best he could, going back and forth to the local food bank, with longer and longer lines and less and less free groceries. Whew! was all he could summon up as he walked along the avenue. Christmas was a week away, and he still had not bought the boy a nice present. Any present at this juncture would suffice. He had maybe \$10 in his pocket, and he still had to get some lunch for himself. The groceries from the food bank were already saved for their dinner and tomorrow's breakfast. As the passersby left his circle of vision he could not help himself- he began to cry... just a tickle, but enough to feel a tear or two slowly slide down his cheek.

The Mercedes parked outside the jewelry store was empty. He could see something laying on the front passenger seat, a gift wrapped tiny box. As he got closer to the driver's side door he could not help but try the handle. It was unlocked. The door was unlocked! His head wheeled around to the front of the jewelry store. He noticed shoppers busy in their usual buying modes inside. No one seemed to be exiting the front door. Before he could take more than a few breaths he was already turning the corner... with that tiny box in hand. He walked real fast, but not too fast to attract attention. The first restaurant he came to seemed to engulf him. Now he was inside. He rushed to the Men's Room, secured himself into a stall, and quickly ripped open the box. It was a watch... a nice Timex. He was glad it wasn't a Rolex or something really too expensive. He hid it inside his coat pocket and hurried out. His son would have a better Christmas than expected... and he felt absolutely no guilt about it at all.

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