

Paul Giamati

Vince Vaughn

Kevin Spacey

JOE CLAUS

Fred Claus

by

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INT. MEDIEVAL HOME - 1700 YEARS AGO (GIVE OR TAKE)

We open in the center of a MEDIEVAL HOME... Quarters are tight. A stone hearth sits in the middle of the room.

Next to the hearth sits a MOTHER, ruddy-cheeked and hearty. She is in the middle of a painful labor, attended to by a MIDWIFE. Next to them sits the FATHER - a small bald man, extremely worried.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

You've probably heard many stories that begin a long long time ago, in a land far far away. This one does as well. But I assure you: this is a story you haven't heard before. It is the story of a boy named Fred. And it begins right here.

The Mother SCREAMS in pain.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

You must excuse Fred's mother. You see, back in the middle ages, having a baby was much harder. There were no hospitals, no medicines for pain. The only thing that remains the same today as it was back then, was the father's role in the birth process.

MOTHER

(to Father)

YOU MISERABLE SWINE! LOOK AT WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO ME! ONE NIGHT YOU DRINK ALE AND FEEL ROMANTIC! ONE NIGHT! AND LOOK AT ME! I'M GIVING BIRTH TO AN OXEN!

As always, the Father remains calm and nurturing.

FATHER

My dear wife, I assure you I feel your agony.

MOTHER

YOU WANT TO FEEL MY AGONY? GO OUTSIDE, PLUCK A TEN POUND POTATO, SWALLOW IT WHOLE, AND MAKE IT COME OUT THE OTHER END!!!

MIDWIFE

It is time. You must push, Dear. Push.

One last gigantic PUSH. The midwife pulls back holding something. She looks at the yet unseen baby, astonished.

MOTHER

What is it!? What is wrong?

MIDWIFE

(stunned)

He is the fattest baby I have ever seen.

The parents GASP, relieved. They look down at their newborn child. The BABY is revealed. He really is the absolute fattest baby of all time. Nevertheless, he's adorable. Smiling even. His cheeks are rosy and flushed, just like his mother.

FATHER

Why does he not cry?

They look back down at their smiling newborn. The baby opens his mouth, about to cry. But instead of crying ...

BABY

Ho, ho, ho.

Stunned, the midwife CROSSES herself. The mother picks up her baby. His weight stuns her as well.

MOTHER

Oh, good Lord.

(then)

He's perfect in every way. What will we name him?

FATHER

My father was called Nicholas.

MOTHER

Nicholas. Yes. Nicholas Claus. My Saint Nicholas.

The parents take in their child, blissful. Suddenly, they hear a RUSTLING in the corner of the room. It causes Father Claus to realize they've forgotten ...

FATHER CLAUS

Frederick? Would you like to come and meet your brother?

Everyone turns to the corner of the room.

ANGLE ON FRED

For the first time we reveal a scrawny, tow-headed boy in the corner - FREDERICK Claus. Biting his nails, Fred nervously steps forward. Hesitantly, he takes a very heavy Nicholas in his arms.

NARRATOR

Fred loved Nicholas from the first moment he met him. In fact, that day he made him a promise ...

Fred holds Nicholas up - face to face. He kisses him on the forehead.

FRED

I promise to be the best big brother in the world, Nicholas.

NICHOLAS

Ho, ho, ho.

The family LAUGHS and cuddles the new baby.

NARRATOR

But Fred's promise is just the beginning of his story. You see, sometimes it's easier to make a promise than it is to keep one.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CLAUS HOME - SIX YEARS LATER

The family sits around their pine tree filled backyard. It's a MEDIEVAL BIRTHDAY PARTY. Nicholas (now six, and even fatter) is the center of attention, surrounded by friends and gifts. Fred, now twelve, approaches him. Fred holds a GIFT of his own.

FRED

Happy birthday, Nicholas. I made this for you.

NICHOLAS

Why thank you, Frederick!

Nicholas HUGS Fred.

MOTHER CLAUS

That was very nice of you, Frederick.
(then, noticing)
Where are you going Nicholas?

Nicholas has SCOOPED UP all his gifts (including Fred's).

NICHOLAS

There's a poor orphan name Henry who lives down the road. I'm bringing all my gifts to him. He needs them more than I.

Mother Claus GASPS in pride and runs to Nick.

MOTHER CLAUS

Why Nicholas! Isn't that lovely?!

Fred looks confused.

FRED

Do you really think Henry needs a leather journal with the name Nicholas on the cover?

MOTHER CLAUS

Oh. Frederick, stop being difficult. It's a saintly thing he did. My little Saint Nicholas!

Mother Claus wraps Nicholas in a bear hug. Almost sympathetically, Father Claus PATS Fred on the shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CLAUS HOME - MONTHS LATER

Fred comes downstairs, wearing a new suit. He looks adorable.

NARRATOR

And so it went for Fred. Every time he managed to make his parents proud ...

MOTHER CLAUS

Why Frederick, don't you look nice?

FATHER CLAUS

A real gentleman, Son.

NARRATOR

Nicholas managed to make his parents even prouder.

Nicholas plops out of the CHIMNEY. He's wearing a ridiculous RED JUMPSUIT - almost a one-sie.

NICHOLAS

The door was locked so I decided to drop down the chimney. How fun!

MOTHER CLAUS

Nicholas! Don't you look dashing!?

Fred tilts his head to look at his brother. In truth, he kind of looks like an idiot.

NICHOLAS

I sewed it myself. I know money is tight this year so I used the left-over fabric from your drapery, Mother.

MOTHER CLAUS

Well, you look just lovely in red. It's definitely your color. Making your own clothes! You really are too much, Nicholas.

Mother Claus runs to Nicholas and wraps him in another hug. Fred has busied himself LOOKING UP the chimney.

FRED

If the door was locked, why didn't you just knock?

MOTHER CLAUS

Because he's inventive, Frederick! You know, you really should try and be more like your brother.

Father Claus PATS Fred on the shoulder once again and follows his wife toward Nicholas.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CLAUS HOME - DAYTIME

We pan up a large pine tree in a field. At the top, Fred sits on a branch next to a self-made BIRDHOUSE. The birdhouse is bright blue with yellow stripes. Intricate. And feeding in the house is a beautiful BLUEBIRD.

FRED

(to bird)

I don't wish to hate him. He means well. And I promised to be the best big brother in the world.

The bird looks at Fred, his head askew.

FRED (CONT'D)

You're the only one who understands me, Chirp-Chirp.

The bluebird CHIRPS twice. Fred smiles. But then he hears something: a SAWING NOISE. And just like that ... the tree (with Fred in it) WIPES the frame.

ON THE GROUND

~~Where Fred lies amidst the branches. Nicholas, plump and red, runs to him.~~

NICHOLAS

Frederick! I thought you were playing in the fields! Are you alright!?

Fred NODS, too dazed to respond.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

I noticed how much you liked that tree and I knew winter was approaching, so I had the men chop it down and now we're going to bring it inside the house and put presents under it! Isn't that wonderful? Frederick?

Fred isn't listening. He walks toward the tree. He finds his birdhouse, SMASHED to pieces, under a branch. He looks up in the air. The bluebird HOVERS there for a moment, then flies away, never to return.

Fred looks at his brother, turns, and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CLAUS HOME - EVENING

Fred's giant tree is CRAMMED into the tiny room, literally engulfing it. The family sits under the tree, opening presents. Fred skulks in the corner.

NARRATOR

Ah, poor Fred. That tree was the last straw. He began to resent his brother, and his parents, and even his life. And like many unhappy children, he became angry. Naughty even.

Fred THROWS an apple across the room, hitting Nicholas in the back. Though his parents don't notice, Nicholas turns and sees what Fred did. Nicholas' face drops - he doesn't want his brother to hate him.

FATHER CLAUS

What's the matter, Nicholas?

NICHOLAS

(sadly, covering)

Nothing.

NARRATOR

But while Fred grew worse and worse, Nicholas grew even more generous, and eventually, he fulfilled his mother's prophesy. In manhood, he literally became a saint.

A MONTAGE OF FAMILY PORTRAITS (as the family grows older) covers the rest of the narration. In the portraits, Fred become progressively more sullen whereas Nicholas (always in red) becomes jollier and fatter.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Now it's a little known rule of sainthood, but when you become a saint, you freeze in time, eternally ageless. It's an even lesser known fact, but the rule applies to immediate family of the saint as well - parents and siblings. Now you probably already have your suspicions of what became of Saint Nick. You may even have heard a story or two about him. But as I told you before, this is a story about Fred. And the next part of Fred's story occurs in a time and place that might be a little more familiar to you...

CUT TO:

We're CLOSE ON a quaint, quiet CHRISTMAS VILLAGE. We PULL BACK, revealing that the village is actually a Christmas display in a Macy's Window.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - MORNING

A CAPTION reads: New York City, December 16th, 2005.

We PULL AWAY from the window and TRACK our shot down the street, passing Christmas displays in every store-front. Santa Claus is everywhere, a legend.

An adult FRED CLAUSE stands grimacing in front of one such window. He's at the famous MANHATTAN FAO SCHWARTZ. Fred is disheveled and sarcastic looking - centuries of being overshadowed have clearly taken their toll.

A LITTLE GIRL drags her mother toward the toy store.

LITTLE GIRL

Mommy, Mommy! Can we go see Santa? I love Santa so much! I want to see Santa!

FRED

Hey Sweetie. You want to know a secret about Santa?

The girl nods eagerly. Her mother smiles.

FRED (CONT'D)

He peed his bed until he was seven.

The mother pulls her away. Fred smiles and continues on.

EXT. ROCKEFELLER CENTER - LATER

Fred CRINGES at the sight of the ROCKEFELLER CENTER TREE. He approaches the corner of a street where CAROLERS sing *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*. Fred interrupts.

FRED

Excuse me? I was just wondering: have you all ever thought about the lyrics you're singing? "He knows when you've been sleeping, he knows when you're awake." If that's not serious Big Brother propaganda, I don't know what is.

CAROLER

It's just a song, Man.

FRED

Yes. And *Mein Kampf* was just a book.

A few carolers GASP in horror.

FRED (CONT'D)

(smiling)
Merry Christmas.

Leaving them stunned, Fred walks away and hails a cab.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI CAB - LATER

Fred sits in back. Up front, A FOREIGN CABBIE wears a red Santa hat. On the radio, *Here Comes Santa Claus* plays. The cabbie SINGS along in a heavy accent.

FRED

You mind changing the station?

The Cabbie looks at Fred, annoyed. He switches the station. *Jingle Bells* plays. As he starts singing ...

FRED (CONT'D)

Change it, please.

Irritated the cabbie changes the station once more. Now Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer plays. The cabbie sings the familiar interjections.

RADIO

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer had a very shiny nose ...

CABBIE

(with heavy accent)

Like a light bulb!

Fred slams his head back in his seat.

CUT TO:

EXT. 28TH AND LEXINGTON - CONTINUOUS

Exiting the cab, Fred spots a young METER-MAID putting a ticket on a car. The woman is pretty, but not in the classical sense. No make-up, no fuss. She could easily replace the glasses with contacts ... but won't. Fred watches her. A MAN exits the STARBUCKS next door sipping his coffee. He sees the ticket being placed on his car.

MAN

Wait! Wait! That's my car! I was just there for a minute!

METER-MAID

And?

MAN

(obviously lying)

Listen, my wife's pregnant and was craving a frappacino. You know how a woman gets when she's pregnant, right?

Unimpressed, the meter-maid continues writing the ticket.

MA

Ah, c'mon Sweetheart. It's Christmas-time.

METER-MAID

Well, then here's a gift. Hope you like it. It's not returnable.

She hands him the TICKET.

METER-MAID (CONT'D)

By the way, when you're trying to talk a woman out of giving you a ticket, it's probably best if you didn't call her 'Sweetheart.' I'm sure you don't talk that way to your very pregnant wife who you're bringing the highly caffeinated frappacino that you already drank half of. Merry Christmas.

Beaten, the man takes the ticket and leaves. Fred approaches the woman. He kisses her on the cheek.

FRED

You've never been sexier, Wanda.

Fred and Wanda embrace and begin catching up. As they do, they see a NYC HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE approaching. A HAPPY COUPLE hold each other tightly. As it passes ...

FRED (CONT'D)

Those carriages are a tourist trap rip-off!

WANDA

And the horses are malnourished!

Fred kisses Wanda on the cheek and they begin walking down the street together in contented silence.

WANDA (CONT'D)

So ... tomorrow's my birthday.

Fred doesn't look up. His response is monotone.

FRED

Happy birthday.

Wanda tries again.

WANDA

And I was wondering if I should plan on, you know, spending it with you. I mean, we've been together for two years and --

FRED

Wanda, you know how we feel about birthdays. They're a Hallmark creation. Why should we celebrate the fact that you've grown a year closer to death? C'mon, Hon'.

WANDA

No, you're right. Sorry, I don't know where that came from.

(MORE)

WANDA (CONT'D)

(a beat, then)

Hey, there's a new Orangutan exhibit at the Bronx Zoo. Wanna go buy some monkey masks and prison uniforms and go make the hypocrites at that animal enslavement camp uncomfortable?

FRED

There's my girl.

Wanda smiles weakly as Fred KISSES her cheek. Fred looks at his watch, realizing ...

FRED (CONT'D)

Actually, I better get to work. Gotta do my part to keep spreading that Christmas cheer.

CUT TO:

EXT. LARGE BROWNSTONE - HOURS LATER

A VAN with lettering reading "Repo-Man(hattan)," sits in front of a lavish home. The house is decorated to the hilt in Christmas decor.

Fred EXITS the brownstone.. His job is the exact opposite of his brother's: he's a Repo Man! Fred is carrying a LEATHER OTTOMAN and is followed by a group of large men, carrying other goods. Fred grimaces at the sight of all the Christmas decor on the front lawn.

WORKER

Fred, this flat screen wasn't even on the list.

FRED

Otto, a twelve year old had a fifty-two inch plasma in her room. Trust me, we're teaching her a valuable life lesson.

Punctuating his thought, a SANTA STATUE HO-HO-HO'S, scaring the crap out of Fred.

INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - LATER

We're CLOSE ON the same leather ottoman. We PULL BACK revealing Fred. He sits on his couch with his feet propped up on the ottoman. The apartment is filled with goods Fred has obviously stolen from repossessions. None of the furniture matches - end-tables from one house, a couch from another, a love seat even rests on it's side in the corner - there's no room for it.

~~Fred is going through his mail. He discards one "PAST DUE" bill after another. Only one ENVELOPE catches his attention, postmarked, "North Pole." Fred opens it.~~

CLOSE-UP OF CHRISTMAS CARD

It's from his brother, bearing a picture of Santa, Mrs. Claus, the Elves, and the Reindeer. Inside is a note:

"Dearest, Frederick. Merry Christmas! It's been a big year for us. Vixen gave birth to a baby reindeer! He looks just like Prancer! We didn't even know they got along (LOL)! The Little Missus sends her --"

BACK TO SCENE

A KNOCK on the window (by the fire escape) interrupts. There stands a cute, if a bit mischievous, boy. This is SLAM (10). Slam is basically a black Dennis the Menace.

SLAM

Hey Fred! Whatcha doin'?

FRED

Nothing.

SLAM

Can I come hang out?

FRED

No.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Fred sits next to Slam on the couch. Slam is mid-story, clearly desperate for attention and love.

SLAM

So I'm not sure how Santa is gonna know where to bring me my gifts this year because I was living with my Grandma when I wrote the letter, but then she got sick so I was living with my cousin when I sent the letter, but then she moved, so now I'm living with my Aunt but a lot of times we wind up staying at her boyfriend's. What do you think, Fred? Do you think Santa'll find me?

Fred looks at Slam blankly for a long beat.

FRED

Let's play the quiet game.

Fred FLICKS on the television. Miracle on 34th St. is playing. Fred changes the channel. A Charlie Brown Christmas. He flips again. Christmas with Regis and Kelly. At wits end, Fred shuts off the television. They sit in silence for a while.

SLAM

I should have gotten a cell phone. Then I could have left Santa my cell phone number and he could have called me before Christmas just to see where I was. Do you think I should have done that?

FRED

I think you just lost the quiet game.

(a beat, then)

Let me tell you something about Santa Claus, Kid. Santa Claus is the most over-rated icon in history. Alexander the Great, Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Mandela, Joe Dimmagio. Heroes all. But Santa Claus? Completely over-rated. And perverse I might add. I dare you to name me another public figure who is commended for forcing small children to sit on his lap.

SLAM

I never thought of it that way.

(then)

But c'mon Fred. If you could ask Santa for anything this year, what would it be?

FRED

Money, Kid. I'd ask Santa for boatloads of hard, unmarked, untraceable cash. Then I'd take that money and buy my own island. An island that's always hot and where every drink comes with an umbrella in it. And you know what the best part of this island is? It's so far away from the rest of the world that no one has even heard of Santa Claus there. I call it Santaless Ville.

Slam takes in Fred for a beat.

SLAM

Dude, you've got serious Santa issues don't you?

~~There's A KNOCK at the door. Fred opens it, revealing a~~
large intimidating man. This is Fred's boss, QUINCE.
When Fred sees Quince, he quickly shuts the door, talking
to him through a small open crack.

QUINCE

I need to send you on a job. Your phone
isn't working. You forget to pay the
bill again?

FRED

I didn't forget to pay it. I refused. A
subtle difference, but I think an
important one.

QUINCE

You gonna let me in?

Fred looks around. Stolen repossessions are everywhere.

FRED

I'm kinda busy right now, Quince.

QUINCE

Yeah, well, I'm kinda gonna rip this door
off the hinges if you don't let me in.

Fred takes a deep breath and opens the door.

FRED

Before you fly off the handle --

QUINCE

(looking around)
What the --

FRED

This isn't what it looks like --

Quince GRABS Fred by the throat, and pins him against the
wall.

QUINCE

You're stealing from me? I'm gonna take
you apart.

VOICE (O.S.)

Let him go.

They turn. Slam stands behind them, feigning toughness.
He's holding A PHONE up in the air, like a weapon.

SLAM

I already dialed the nine and the one.
You so much as twitch I will hit one
again.

Quince and Fred turn toward Slam.

FRED.

He knows the phone doesn't work, Kid.

SLAM

Oh.

Slam throws the phone away and steps toward Quince.

SLAM (CONT'D)

I may not look like much, Big Man, but I
pack a punch. Brown belt, 66th Street
Karate Dojo. Last week, Mikey Rosenberg
stole my kickball during recess. Let's
just say he spent the afternoon with the
nurse. You make one more move you'll be
playing the quiet game permanently.

After a beat taking in Slam, Quince turns back to Fred.
He SLAMS him against the wall.

QUINCE

I'll be sending guys over for everything
here. Plus, you owe me twenty-five
grand. Call it interest. I want it by
New Years. Or you're gonna have much
bigger problems than a disconnected phone
line.

Quince storms out. Fred turns back toward Slam.

SLAM

Thank God I was here, huh?

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET CORNER - NEXT MORNING

Fred stands in a PHONE BOOTH, going through CLASSIFIED
ADS. Every ad has been crossed out in red. No luck.

FRED

(into phone)

Yes, I understand you filled the
position. Listen Man, I'm desperate.

(a beat, listening)

Oh, it's the holiday season? Really?
Thanks for letting me know. That
explains all the lights!

~~Fred hangs up and looks down at the one circled ad. It~~
reads: SALVATION ARMY, HIRING IMMEDIATELY.

EXT. 34TH STREET - HOURS LATER

Spread out as far as the eye can see (spaced about twenty feet from one another) are identical SALVATION ARMY SANTA ClausS, ringing their bells and jingling their pots. We MOVE IN on one of them, dead in the middle. It's Fred. He couldn't be more miserable. A YOUNG WOMAN passes by.

FRED
(monotone)
Hey Lady. Merry Christmas. Give to the
Salvation Army.

The woman ignores him.

FRED (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Ho.

The lady turns around.

WOMAN
What did you say?

FRED
(faking cheer)
Ho, ho, ho. Merry Christmas.

The woman raises her brow and TOSSES some change into the pot. She walks away. Fred looks over his shoulder. When he sees that the coast is clear, he reaches into the pot and POCKETS the change.

VOICE (O.S.)
What are you doing, Man?

Fred turns. It's his NEIGHBORING SALVATION ARMY SANTA.

FRED
What?

SALVATION ARMY SANTA
Did you just take that change from the
pot?

FRED
No.

SALVATION ARMY SANTA
I saw you, Dude!

FRED

Hey Santa, I'll do things my way you do things yours, okay? Just mind your business.

The Santa begins marching toward Fred.

SALVATION ARMY SANTA

The Salvation Army is my business.

ANOTHER SALVATION ARMY SANTA senses the commotion.

SALVATION ARMY SANTA #2

What's going on over there?

SALVATION ARMY SANTA #1

This guy's stealing from the pot.

SALVATION ARMY SANTA #2

What!? Hey Jermaine! Get over here.

Salvation Army Santa #2 starts walking toward Fred along with JERMAINE, an extra large Salvation Army Santa.

FRED'S POV

Three Santas are converging on him, angry. Needless to say, it's an odd sight. PEDESTRIANS begin gathering.

JERMAINE SANTA

Show me your pot.

FRED

(child-like)

I don't want to show you my pot.

The Jermaine Santa grabs Fred's pot and turns it upside down. Nothing.

JERMAINE SANTA

Empty your pockets.

FRED

No.

He forcibly grabs Fred and empties his pockets. A ton of LOOSE CHANGE falls out.

FRED (CONT'D)

I parked at a meter.

The crowd begins JEERING. The Santas close in.

FRED (CONT'D)

Alright, let's just relax, fellas.
There's kids here. There's no need to
beat down Santa in front of --

Mid-sentence, Fred (not exactly a fighter) SLAPS Jermaine Santa in the face and starts RUNNING AWAY. The Santas race after him.

EXT. 34TH ST - CONTINUOUS

From OVERHEAD we watch the chase move down 34th St., passing even more Salvation Army Santas who HEAR THE CALL and join the chase. A lot of strange stuff goes on in NYC. But never has the city seen a sight this odd.

EXT. CORNER OF 34TH ST. - CONTINUOUS

A television reporter does a stand-up report.

REPORTER

I'm coming to you live from 34th St.,
made famous by the classic film, *Miracle*
on 34th St. On no corner of any street
in America is the Christmas Spirit as
alive.

Unbeknownst to the reporter, Fred races by behind him.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Yes, standing here, you can practically
feel the magic of Christmas. The
shoppers, the music, the joy of --

The line of rabid, screaming Santas burst into frame,
KNOCKING DOWN the reporter and TRAMPLING him.

CUT TO:

INT. TOYS R' US SANTA AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Children and their parents wait on line to sit on the
Toys R Us Santa's lap. A timid BOY is next in line.

TOYS R US SANTA

Step right up, little boy! Ho ho ho!
Tell Santa what you want from Christmas.

As usually happens, the little boy bursts into tears.

FATHER

It's okay, Randy. Santa's not scary, you see?

At that moment, Fred races by (trailed by the Santas).

FRED

They're gonna kill me!

SALVATION ARMY SANTA

Get him!

SALVATION ARMY SANTA #2

Knock him down and smother him!

Randy bursts into hysterics all over again.

ON FRED

Who runs down an aisle. He freezes. THREE SANTAS block the exit of the aisle. He turns around. TEN SANTAS stand there. He's trapped.

The Santas move in. Fred looks to his right and grabs a yellow WIFFLE BALL BAT from a shelf. He lets out a WAR-CRY and takes a swing at the first Santa. They jump on him. It's a giant SANTA Claus RUMBLE! Santa piles upon Santa. Absolute chaos.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL PHONE BOOTH - THREE HOURS LATER

Fred, beat up, stands in front of a phone. His costume is tattered and torn from the Santa Rumble.

His attention is drawn to a HOLDING CELL to the side. A bunch of SCARY THUGS are eyeing him.

FRED

Answer the phone, Wanda! Answer the phone!

(turning to Cop)

What if I leave a message?

COP

We put you back in the cell until she calls back and pays your bail.

Fred looks at the cell. In light of circumstances, this option is especially unappealing. A THUG steps forward.

THUG

Hey, Santa: I'm still waiting for that
Tonka Truck I asked you for when I was
nine. You holding out on me, Fatboy?

The other thugs LAUGH. Fred takes a deep breath.

COP

You have anyone else to call?

Clearly, Fred doesn't. He SIGHS and picks the phone back
up.

FRED

Yes, hi Operator. I'd like to make a
collect call.

(a beat, then)

The North Pole. It's unlisted.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CLAUS BEDROOM - MEANWHILE

SANTA Claus stands in front of a mirror, examining his
white hair. He looks sad.

SANTA CLAUS

There's not even a hint of grey in my
hair anymore. It's totally white.

(then)

You think I should dye it?

Mrs. Claus lies in bed. She is reading a book entitled
GINGERBREAD FOR DUMMIES.

MRS. CLAUS

You have a nice full head of hair, Honey.

SANTA CLAUS

It's white, though. It's the stress.
I'm going prematurely white.

Santa plops down in bed, depressed. Instantly, a fat
REINDEER jumps on the bed and LAYS it's head on his foot,
mimicking his master.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Cupid, down.

Cupid doesn't move an inch.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Good boy.

~~Mrs. Claus CHUCKLES. The PHONE RINGS. She answers it.~~

MRS. CLAUS

Hello. This is Mrs. Claus.

(then, coldly)

Yes, we'll accept the charges.

She hands the phone to Santa, unhappy.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

It's your brother.

Santa sits up, excited. As the conversation takes place, we go SPLIT-SCREEN between the two brothers.

SANTA CLAUS

Fred!?

FRED

Hey, Bro. How's it going?

SANTA CLAUS

Great! Oh Fred, it's so good to hear from you!

FRED

Yeah, I meant to call and thank you for the Bose Stereo you sent last Christmas. And the golf clubs the year before while I'm at it. Sorry for taking so long.

SANTA CLAUS

Oh, I'm just glad you liked them.

FRED

So, I hate to call and bother you, but I have no one else to call. I'm just gonna come out with it: I need some money.

Santa's face drops a bit.

SANTA CLAUS

Oh. Again?

Santa reaches into his nightstand and pulls out a plate of his comfort food, COOKIES. Mrs. Claus immediately takes the plate away from him and shakes her head.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Well, of course, Fred. Whatever you need. How much?

Mrs. Claus motions for Santa to talk to her.

~~SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)~~

Do you mind holding on for a second,
Fred?

We LOSE THE SPLIT SCREEN. Santa covers the receiver end
of the phone with his hand.

MRS. CLAUS

You should hang up, Nicholas. You have
enough on your plate without worrying
about him. The efficiency expert is
coming tomorrow and look at you: you're
already eating your stress away.

SANTA CLAUS

I was hungry.

MRS. CLAUS

Eating before bed is the worst thing you
can do for your metabolism.

SANTA CLAUS

He's my brother, Honey.

Mrs. Claus SIGHS.

MRS. CLAUS

Well, just don't enable him. Every time
he gets in trouble you bail him out. You
need to practice tough love.

SANTA CLAUS

I'm a Saint, Honey. Tough love is very
difficult for me.

Santa picks up the phone again. BACK TO SPLIT SCREEN.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

How much do you need, Fred?

FRED

Well, thing is ... I'm kind of in jail.

SANTA CLAUS

What?

FRED

Yeah, long story. So I need five grand
for the bail and another twenty-five
grand on top of that. For something else.

Santa Claus shakes his head.

SANTA CLAUS

Alright, Fred. I'll pay your bail. But if you want the rest ... you're gonna have to ... come up here! Yes, you can work for me! Earn the money!

Mrs. Claus freezes in horror. Fred too.

FRED

I'm not coming up there.

SANTA CLAUS

C'mon, Fred. You've never been up North. I know Mrs. Claus would like to see you.

Santa COVERS Mrs. Claus's mouth before she can scream.

FRED

Bro --

SANTA CLAUS

Fred, I'm sorry, but if you say no then I will not pay your bail.
(then, apologetic)
I'm practicing tough love.

CUT TO:

INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Fred is finishing throwing clothing in a SUITCASE. Wanda ENTERS the front door.

WANDA

Hey. Why are you packing?

FRED

I have to go see my brother.

WANDA

You have a brother?

FRED

Yeah.

WANDA

We've been dating for almost two years. How come you never told me you had a brother?

FRED

I don't know. It never came up.

WANDA

Yes it did. When we first started dating I said, "So Fred, do you have any brothers or sisters?" And you said, "No, Wanda."

FRED

Sweetie, I'm in a little bit of a rush right now.

WANDA

So you're spending the holidays with your mysterious brother. Were you going to tell me?

FRED

It was last minute.

WANDA

Where does he live?

FRED

North.

WANDA

Oh? Upstate? Maine? Canada?

FRED

More north.

WANDA

You know what, Fred? You don't want to invite me to meet your family, fine. You don't have to be cryptic about --

At that moment, Slam BURSTS in. He runs over to Fred.

SLAM

Fred! Fred! Thank God you're home.

FRED

Kid, it's not a good --

Slam hands Fred a crumpled TEN DOLLAR BILL.

SLAM

Here's ten bucks. It's everything I had in my piggy bank. I need you to pretend to be my father.

FRED

What on Earth are you talking about --

VOICE (O.S.)

He's in here.

~~They turn. Two CHILD-SERVICES AGENTS ENTER.~~

FRED

Who the hell are you?

FEMALE AGENT

We're with child services, Sir. We've come to remove this minor from an unfit home. Who are you?

Fred looks at Slam. The poor kid is pleading with his eyes. Fred shakes his head. Of all the times ...

FRED

I'm the boy's father.

Awkwardly, Fred puts his arm around Slam.

ON FRED AND SLAM

We take them in: a white guy with his little black son. It's not very convincing. Fred realizes.

FRED (CONT'D)

He has my feet.

MALE AGENT

Sir, I don't know who you are, but you're not the boy's father. According to our records, both his parents have passed away.

Fred looks down at Slam, surprised.

FRED

You told me they were travelling around Europe.

SLAM

Yeah, and while they vacationed in Paris they left me in a Brooklyn tenement with my unfit aunt. I bet if you pushed you could have gotten it out of me.

Fred kneels down, gently.

FRED

I want you to listen to me, Kid. I like you. I really do. That's a big thing because I don't like many people.

Slam can't help but smile.

FRED (CONT'D)

I know this whole thing seems kinda crappy and it is. And so is the stuff with your parents being dead which, by the way, if you had told me could have bought you a lot more time on my couch - and I'm proud that you didn't use something like that for personal gain.

SLAM

Thanks.

FRED

The way I see it, you found out pretty early that the world isn't fair. And if you know that this early, it gives you an early start on everyone else. You have to take care of yourself now. You know how to do that.

Slam nods. Before Fred can react, Slam HUGS him. Surprised, Fred takes a beat before awkwardly hugging him back. Just like that, Slam turns toward the agents.

SLAM

Let's get something straight. I'm not Little Orphan Annie. If you're waiting for me to sing *The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow* on the way to the orphanage, you're wasting your time. Let's go.

Slam EXITS and the agents follow. Fred watches sadly. He realizes he still has Slam's ten dollars in his hand.

FRED

Kid, wait.

Fred goes to the door, but it's too late. Fred sadly pockets the cash. He turns back around toward Wanda.

WANDA

I'm leaving you, Fred.

FRED

(not getting it)

I'm gonna mail the kid the money back.

WANDA

It was my birthday, today. And you know what? Maybe it is a Hallmark creation. And maybe I am a year closer to death. So I didn't need a card. I didn't need a horse drawn carriage.

(MORE)

WANDA (CONT'D)

But it would have been nice to have
dinner with my boyfriend. It could of
been a number two at Taco Bell. That's
all I required.

FRED

You get sick from Taco Bell.

Wanda smiles, sad.

WANDA

Goodbye Fred.

Wanda exits. Fred goes after her.

FRED

Wanda, wait!

But then Fred freezes, hearing something. Faintly, then
a bit louder. JINGLING. BELLS. CLOPPING on the roof.

FRED (CONT'D)

Perfect timing. As always.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - MINUTES LATER

With his bag slung around his neck, Fred humps up the
fire escape. He arrives on the rooftop as we behold ...

SANTA'S SLEIGH.

It's much larger than you'd expect, roughly the size of a
mid-sized sedan. THE EIGHT REINDEER, lead by RUDOLPH,
pace restlessly. It's quite a sight.

An elf stands in front of the sleigh, ultra serious.
This is WILLY. Like a driver at an airport, Willy holds
up a white sign that reads, "FRED Claus."

WILLY

You're Mr. Claus?

FRED

Yes.

WILLY

Can I see some identification, please?

FRED

Excuse me?

WILLY

It's protocol.

~~Slowly, Fred realizes that Willy is serious. Fred hands~~
him his license. Willy checks it out carefully.

WILLY (CONT'D)

Very nice to meet you, Mr. Claus.

FRED

Fred's fine.

WILLY

I'm Willy. As proof of my identity as an elf, I offer you my card.

He hands Fred a card that reads: "Willy. Head Elf."

FRED

Well, I doubted you before, but now I feel more confident.

Willy looks at him blankly. A sense of humor is not his strong suit. He drags Fred's bag toward the sleigh. A reindeer JUMPS on Fred and starts HUMPING his leg.

WILLY

Vixen! Down!

(apologetic)

Sorry about that. I think she likes you.

Vixen hops down. Fred SNEEZES.

WILLY (CONT'D)

You're not allergic to reindeer are you?

FRED

How would I know?

Fred SNEEZES again.

WILLY

You're allergic.

FRED

Fantastic.

CUT TO:

INT. SLEIGH - CONTINUOUS

Fred settles in the back of the sleigh. It's much nicer than you'd think. Leather seats. Fred skims the magazine rack in front him. It holds various North Pole publications: "Santa," "Santa Weekly," etc.

~~Willy sits in the front of the sleigh. He's separated~~
 from Fred by a GLASS WALL (like a limo). Though he's
 just feet from Fred, he talks through an INTERCOM.

WILLY

(ala flight attendant)

A ho, ho, ho to our passengers. We here
 in Santa's Sleigh welcome you aboard.
 For your safety, we ask you to listen to
 the following safety precautions. In the
 event of a change in cabin pressure,
 oxygen masks will drop from the roof --

OXYGEN MASKS, shaped like Santa hats, drop from the
 ceiling. Fred SIGHS. It's going to be a long trip.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SLEIGH - TEN MINUTES LATER

Willy is still going. Fred is still sneezing.

WILLY

At last check, the temperature in the
 North Pole is a balmy negative twenty-
 seven degrees. That concludes our pre-
 flight instructions. We know you don't
 really have any other options when flying
 to the North Pole, but nevertheless,
 we're glad you chose Santa's sleigh.
 Enjoy the flight.

Willy turns forward and SNAPS the reigns.

WILLY (CONT'D)

Ho!

And just like that the reindeer take off. No running
 start or gradual ascent as Christmas tales would have us
 believe. Just straight up - like a rocket ship. Fred's
 head slams back. He SCREAMS!

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - CONTINUOUS

The reindeer SHOOT through the sky. Fred SCREAMS the
 entire time. His CRY carries through the whole city. Up
 and up and up, until finally hitting their altitude.
 They level off, and begin a gentle, steady ride forward.

INT. SLEIGH - CONTINUOUS

Fred's head is still flush against the seat, his eyes rolled back. He's still SCREAMING even though the ascent has ended. Finally Willy comes over the INTERCOM.

WILLY

Ladies and Gentlemen, the seat belt sign has been turned off. Please feel free to roam about the sleigh.

Fred, dazed, looks out the side of the sleigh.

FRED'S POV.

This isn't your typical airplane view of clouds and skylines. They're much higher right now. It's an overview of THE ENTIRE EARTH. Fred takes it in, awed.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SLEIGH - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Fred SNEEZES. Willy comes over the intercom again.

WILLY

Ladies and Gentlemen, we're about to begin our descent to the North Pole. As you may have noticed, the seat belt sign has been turned back on.

FRED

Wait, we're there, already? Is it going to be as steep as --

Before he can finish, the sleigh literally drops down out of the sky. Fred SLAMS back into his seat and begins SCREAMING again. Screaming and screaming and screaming until the sleigh levels off and slows. Fred looks out.

FRED'S POV

Only about fifty feet from the ground, Fred (as well as the audience) gets an overview of the North Pole for the first time. It's really quite astounding.

First off, the colors: everything is RED, GREEN, AND WHITE. Bright. Vivid. Like the first time you ever saw the grass and uniforms at a professional baseball game.

~~A large STRUCTURE, candy-cane striped, sits dead center.~~
Other buildings in the village spiral out from this center building. In effect, the buildings (as a whole) form a giant CANDY CANE SHAPE.

On the ground ELVES flow, elegant. Why? They're skating.

FLOOD LIGHTS shoot up from the ground everywhere, lighting the whole community.

The reindeer LAND. Fred reaches for the door, desperate to get out of the sleigh.

WILLY

I should warn you, Fred. You might want to bundle up. It's quite cold in the North Pole. Oh, and also --

Fred grabs the door handle.

FRED

Willy, I live in New York City, okay? I can handle a little cold weath --

Stepping outside the sled, Fred screams.

FRED (CONT'D)

OMIGOD IT'S FREEZING!

Fred SLIPS on the ice and lands flat on his butt. He lies on the ground, SHIVERING and SNEEZING. Reindeer begin HUMMING him again. Willy approaches.

WILLY

The ground is solid ice. I was going to warn you of that, but you stepped outside, screamed, then slipped on the ice.

FRED

Yes. Thanks for the recap, Willy.

Willy helps Fred up. Fred looks in front of him.

FRED'S POV

The entire community of ELVES stand in front of Santa's Workshop, looking at Fred. Five female CHEERLEADER elves in elf/cheerleader costumes step forward.

CHEERLEADERS

F-R-E, D-D-I-E, that's the way we spell Freddie. Freddie. Merry Christmas Freddie! Yay!

~~The cheerleaders begins jumping and cheering. Fred looks~~
to Willy, confused.

WILLY
The Christmas Spirit.

FRED
Of course they are.

Quickly, a BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN wearing a business suit, glasses, and a headset rushes over toward Fred.

WOMAN
Mr. Claus, it's so nice to have you here.
I'm Charlene, Santa's Little Helper. I
trust your flight was quick and painless?

FRED
Actually --

CHARLENE
Great, great. I'm sorry to be so rushed
but I'm trying to keep Santa on schedule.
We're just one hundred, thirty seven
hours and twenty-five minutes till D-day.

WILLY
(in love)
Charlene is as brilliant with numbers as
she is beautiful.

Charlene is too frazzled to heed the compliment.

CHARLENE
Oh, well thank you ...

Charlene searches for a name.

WILLY
(deflating)
Willy.

CHARLENE
Willy. Now let's get this whole thing
started, shall we? We're running behind.

Willy deflates a bit, but gathers himself quickly.

WILLY
One. And two. One, two, three, four!

In unison, elves begin CHANTING: *Here Comes Santa Claus.*

ELVES

Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus, right down Santa Claus Lane.

ON THE BUILDING

Where four elves emerge. They wear dark suits, dark sunglasses, and large earpieces. These are Santa's SECRET SERVICE ELVES.

HEAD SECRET SERVICE ELF

(into earpiece)

Big Red is exiting the building. I repeat, Big Red is exiting the building.

SANTA (O.S.)

Ho, ho, ho!

And like that, the elves part in the middle, creating a militarily precise lane. This clears a path in the middle of them marked "SANTA Claus LANE."

FRED

You've got to be kidding me.

Santa and Mrs. Claus step out and walk toward Fred.

SANTA CLAUS

There's my big brother!

Santa RUNS to Fred. In his excitement, he SLIPS on the ice and SLIDES directly into Fred. They FALL to the ground in a heap. The reindeer begin HUMPING Fred again. The secret service elves immediately run to Santa's side.

SECRET SERVICE ELF

Big Red has hit the ice. I repeat, Big Red has hit the ice.

The elves jump on Fred as if he's an assassin. One puts him in a HALF NELSON.

FRED

OWWWW!

SANTA CLAUS

Easy, boys. He's my brother.

Santa helps Fred to his feet.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

You have to excuse the guys. The week before Christmas is obviously a very tense time for them. They can't let anything happen to me.

~~Santa wraps Fred in a giant BEAR HUG.~~

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

My goodness, it's great to see you Fred!

FRED

(muffled)

Good to see you, too.

SANTA CLAUS

Say hello to Mrs. Claus!

Fred turns. He's face to face with Mrs. Claus.

FRED

How are you, Annette?

MRS. CLAUS

Oh, you know, busy baking. A billion cookies here, ten thousand gingerbread houses there. And those Christmas tree shaped cookies may just be the death of me. Very intricate. But I'm not complaining. I mean, what's a little carpal tunnel syndrome compared to the happiness people get from Christmas goodies?

Mrs. Claus leans in and KISSES Fred on the cheek.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

You look well.

FRED

You too. You've lost weight.

SANTA CLAUS

(child-like)

What about me? Do I look like I've lost any weight?

Fred looks at his brother. He's really big.

FRED

It's hard to tell. You know, the suit's bulky and everything.

SANTA CLAUS

(holding out hope)

Yeah, it's probably the suit.

(then)

C'mon, Fred. I'll give you the tour!

~~SECRET SERVICE ELF~~

(into headset)

Big Red's gonna want the Ho-Ho-Ho-Mobile.
I repeat, Big Red's gonna want the Ho-Ho-Ho-Mobile.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HO-HO-HO-MOBILE - FIVE MINUTES LATER

The Ho-ho-ho-mobile is part moped, part zambonie. Santa sits in the driver's seat, wearing a helmet, happy as a big red clam. Fred sits in the tiny SIDECAR, wearing his helmet. He's freezing, sneezing, and miserable.

They arrive at a building. A sign out front reads: "The North Pole Post Office, happily serving our community through snow, snow, or snow."

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Fred and Santa stand in the back room. It's an intricate postal system - CHUTES (shaped like water-slides) drop mail from all over the world into LARGE BINS labeled by continent (AFRICA, AUSTRALIA, etc.)

SANTA CLAUS

We get over nine hundred thousand letters a day during season. Busiest post office in the world.

Two elves ENTER - a married couple, LINDA AND BOB. They both wear postal gear, miniature mail deliverers.

BOB

Linda, for God's sake, you can't just throw the mail from Australia into the Africa bin.

LINDA

Don't yell at me, Bob. The Australia bin was getting full and I had to take action. I don't see what the big deal is.

BOB

Oh you don't? You don't? Well maybe you can explain it to the kid in Kenya who gets a surfboard for Christmas!

SANTA CLAUS

Ho, ho, ho!

Linda and Bob turn. Immediately, they shift tone.

LINDA AND BOB

Santa!

SANTA CLAUS

Linda and Bob, allow me to introduce my brother, Fred Claus.

Fred shakes their hands.

FRED

(trying charm)

Hey don't stop fighting on my account.
I'm a sucker for a disgruntled postal worker.

Everyone FREEZES at this. Santa CLOSES HIS EYES, sensing what's coming. Bob marches up to Fred's waist.

BOB

(pissed off)

Are you kidding me with that?

FRED

(confused)

With what?

BOB

Don't play dumb, Wiseguy. What you were just doing is reaffirming a stereotype - the rampaging postal work. You think because my wife and I get a little stressed around the holidays and let off a little steam by playfully yelling at each other that it means we're a couple of nutcases biding our time until complete psychotic breaks? Is that what you think? What other stereo-type jokes you have? Wanna make a crack about our height? Know any good midget jokes?

Fred turns toward Santa.

FRED

So this was fun. Where to next?

CUT TO:

EXT. FROSTY'S TAVERN - ESTABLISHING SHOT

A small pub, next to the post office. A neon light flickers out front. It reads, "Happy Hour, nightly. Half off candy corn and egg nog.

INT. FROSTY'S TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Santa and Fred walk inside. Fred is still shivering.

SANTA CLAUS

Yep, even the North Pole has a watering hole.

FRED

Man, it's freezing in here.

VOICE (O.S.)

Damn right it is!

Fred turns. Behind the bar stands the proprietor of the tavern: FROSTY THE SNOWMAN.

ON FROSTY

Just as we've always pictured him - three snowballs make up his body, a carrot acts as a nose, and two lumps of black coal for eyes. However, Frosty is not completely as we might envision him. A CIGAR dangles from his mouth. And he speaks with a distinct Brooklyn accent.

FROSTY

Yep, I keep the place at exactly thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit. At this point in my career, there's no need to stress out about melting, you know?

Fred's jaw drops.

FROSTY (CONT'D)

My whole life, it's like I've had this gigantic weight on my snow-ders. Is it gonna be hot today? So your brother here calls me up and says, "Frosty, why don't you retire and move up North? It's always freezing here." It's like I've got a new lease on life. Life by the snowballs I like to say, know what I mean?

Fred is still staring at Frosty, his mouth agape.

CUT TO:

EXT. NP100 RADIO STATION - ESTABLISHING SHOT

The outside of the radio station has ANTENNAS shooting out toward the sky. The antennas are all shaped like candy canes.

INT. NP100 RADIO STATION - CONTINUOUS

Santa and Fred stand behind a glass wall, watching a very hip elf, DJ DONNIE D, talk into a microphone.

DJ DONNIE D

Yeah, yeah, yeah, that was *Jingle Bells*, coming in at number five this week, where it's been holding rock steady for let's see here ... six hundred and forty-three consecutive weeks. Quick weather update, it's still really really freakin' cold.

DJ Donnie D notices Santa and WAVES, excited.

DJ DONNIE D (CONT'D)

Well, look at what the sleigh dragged in! It seems we have a very special guest in our studio. It's none other than the Head of the Sled, the King of Christmas Bling, ho, ho, ho, it's Santa. And his brother.

Santa enters. Fred follows wearily. Santa does a cool HANDSHAKE with Donnie and puts on a headset.

DJ DONNIE D (CONT'D)

Know you're busy, Santa. You have time to take a quick call?

SANTA CLAUS

Of course.

Santa shrugs at Fred. We can tell: he loves this.

DJ DONNIE D

Tanya, line four, you're on with Santa.

TANYA (O.S.)

Omigod! I can't believe I'm on with Santa! I'm a huge fan! You're totally hot! Hey Fred, what's it's like being Santa's brother? Is it just awesome?

Donnie turns to Fred. Fred awkwardly leans in.

FRED

Oh yes. Awesome.

(to Santa)

You know what, Bro? I'm pretty wiped. I think I need to get some sleep.

DJ DONNIE D

Ladies and Gentlemen, this just in:
Santa's brother is a party pooper, a
frequent snoozer, an excuse user!

Donnie plays a BOOING SOUND EFFECT. Santa CHUCKLES for a minute, then notices Fred glaring and stops instantly.

SANTA CLAUS

Anyways ... I've already made your
sleeping arrangements. I think you'll be
quite pleased.

CUT TO:

INT. FRED'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Fred rooms with Willy in bunk beds. Willy is on the bottom. Fred's feet hang off the small top bed.

WILLY

You sure you wouldn't be more comfortable
on the bottom?

FRED

Don't think it'll make a difference,
Willy.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S RESIDENCE - MEANWHILE

Santa lies on his side of his bed, going through a stack of LETTERS TO SANTA. We hear running water coming from the bathroom.

SANTA CLAUS

How you doing in there, Honey?

MRS. CLAUS (O.S.)

Just finishing washing my face.

Quickly, Santa opens his nightstand, searching for his secret stash. He pulls out a plate of ...

SANTA CLAUS

What the --

~~Santa's cookies have been replaced by a VEGETABLE PLATE:~~
celery, carrots, and dip.

MRS. CLAUS (O.S.)

(knowingly)

The dip is low-fat and low-carb. I think
you'll like it.

SANTA CLAUS

I want my cookies!

Trying to rid himself of a celery stalk, Santa TOSSES it
to a REINDEER (at the foot of his bed). The reindeer
runs at lightning speed, catches it, and returns it
instantly, as if playing fetch.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

I thought you were my boy, Blitzen.

Mrs. Claus exits the bathroom. She's wearing a sexy (yet
very PG rated) red nightgown. She pushes a button on the
stereo. MARVIN GAYE begins playing. She seductively
walks toward the bed. Santa is still focused on the
vegetable platter.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

I don't understand why I can't have my
cookies.

MRS. CLAUS

Babe, we have to get your weight in
check.

SANTA CLAUS

You know how stressed out I get during
the holiday season. It's these kids.
Used to be they'd write a letter asking
for a few toys. Simple ones, too. A
doll. A yo-yo. But look at this.

Santa UNROLLS a letter all the way down to the floor.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Timmy Beckford from St. Paul, Minnesota.
Look at this: I-pods, video games, a
jersey of ... I don't even know what a
Lebron James is.

Santa SIGHS and ROLLS back up Timmy Beckford's letter.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

I'm going on a diet after New Years.
It's my resolution.

~~MRS. CLAUS~~

There are other ways to relieve stress,
you know?

Santa is searching his nightstand.

SANTA CLAUS

I want my cookies.

MRS. CLAUS

(losing patience)

Would you look at me?

Mrs. Claus stands in front of the bed, swaying gently to the music. Santa chomps a celery stalk, not getting it.

SANTA CLAUS

What?

Mrs. Claus SIGHS and puts on a bathrobe. She PLOPS into bed and picks up her book (*He's Just Not That Into You*).

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Hon'. I'm just under a lot of pressure. On top of everything, that efficiency expert is coming tomorrow. If he sends the Higher Ups a bad report, I really think they'll try to shut us down. They already want to replace my elves with robots and machines.

MRS. CLAUS

That won't happen.

SANTA CLAUS

But what if it does? What will happen to all my elves?

MRS. CLAUS

Oh Nicholas. You carry the weight of the world on your shoulders, don't you? Here.

Mrs. Claus pulls a HEALTH BAR from her nightstand.

SANTA CLAUS

What's this?

MRS. CLAUS

A Zone Bar. I'm starting you on the zone.

SANTA CLAUS

Is gingerbread on the zone?

~~MRS. CLAUS~~

No.

Santa makes a face and takes a bite of the bar. Yuck.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - NEXT MORNING

We PAN a wall, lined with FRAMED PHOTOS. The photos are signed headshots of famous people, like one would find on the wall of a dry cleaners.

ON HOMER'S PICTURE. It reads, "Thanks for the fountain pen, Santa. I think I may begin writing about the Greeks. Homer."

ON RICHARD NIXON'S PICTURE. It reads, "My gratitude for the shredder, Santa. Much needed. Nixon."

ON PAMELA ANDERSON'S PICTURE. It reads, "Love the new hooters, Santa. Thanks, Pam."

SANTA CLAUS (O.S.)

So, whad'ya think of my little workshop?

We realize our POV has been Fred's. He turns toward his brother and takes in the workshop.

ON WORKSHOP

It's absolutely bustling. Elves work feverishly everywhere.

AT WOODEN TABLES/BUILDING STATIONS where BUILDING ELVES, with military precision, build toys - screwing, hammering, and nailing.

AT CONVEYOR BELTS where MUSCLE BOUND ELVES take toys off of the conveyor belts and pass them along the line of other elves toward ...

TESTING STATIONS where TESTING ELVES test toys by BANGING on them. These are like the crash-test dummy elves. An elf takes a deep breath and hops up onto a POGO STICK. After a few bounces, the stick falls apart, and the elf CRASHES to the ground.

IN THE BAKERY WINDOW where Mrs. Claus, covered in flour, frantically bakes cookies.

Fred, Santa, and Willy stand together, watching it all. They approach a separate wall of the workshop.

ON WALL

It's an electronic ticker tape, much like you might see at Nasdaq.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

The Naughty/Nice Department. Key to the whole process. You'll be running it.

Fred takes in the wall. It's electronic and divided into two separate lists: THE NICE LIST and THE NAUGHTY LIST. Each list is divided into two columns - one for the NAME of a child, the other for a DESCRIPTION. A nice description reads "Eagle Scout, helps mother with chores." A naughty one: "Bully, picks on nose-pickers."

Fred turns to the wall bordering the ticker. There are TEN PICTURES of children, along with descriptions. The heading of this wall reads, "TEN MOST NAUGHTY."

FRED

You have a Ten Most Naughty list?

SANTA CLAUS

Of course. It's constantly rotating. Right now, Johnny Rollins in Nova Scotia is occupying the number one spot. In the last month he's bitten his dentist and his doctor and broken skin both times.

FRED

Do you know why he bit them?

SANTA CLAUS

I assume they put their hands near his mouth. Sadly we don't have time for much more analysis than that. Naughty act, naughty kid. Keep it simple.

Fred shakes his head: there's a real sensitivity here.

SANTA CLAUSE

Well, I've got a meeting. Willy will be able to explain everything. Oh, and Fred? See if you can figure out what to do with this Timmy Beckford kid with the enormous list. He's what we call an N&N'er - both naughty and nice. On the one hand, he eats all his vegetables and always says please. On the other hand, there was the unfortunate lizard torturing incident. Needless to say: it was pretty dark.

~~Santa EXITS. Fred and Willy stand in front of the wall.~~

WILLY

Wow. Getting final determination of which children are naughty and which children are nice is quite an honor.

FRED

Highlight of my life so far.

(then)

How do you tell who's what?

Willy walks over to a SNOWGLOBE in the center of the room. It's gigantic and translucent, roughly the size of a Volkswagon Beetle. All across the globe, children are seen in action - some behaving, some not.

WILLY

This is how we look in on children all over the world and determine who's what.

FRED

So basically, you invade their privacy and based on your own subjective opinion determine which kids are worthy of receiving gifts, thus labeling them for the rest of their lives.

WILLY

In a nutshell.

(then)

Here, I'll show you. Name a kid, any kid.

FRED

I'm not a real kid guy, Willy.

(then, realizing)

Actually, I know this one little guy in NYC, Slam. Probably a nickname but --

Just like that ...

ON SNOW GLOBE

Slam has come up on the screen. He sits in a large GROUP BEDROOM in his orphanage. All the kids are writing LETTERS ... except Slam.

KID #1

What are you asking for?

KID #2

A family.

KID #1

Me too.

KID #3

I'm asking Santa for a family, too.

SLAM

Santa's not bringing you families. Let me tell you guys something. Santa Claus is the most over-rated icon in history. Alex the Great, Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Man of Dela. Those are heroes. But Santa Claus. Completely over-rated. And a perv, too. I dare you to name me another public figure who forces small children to sit on his lap.

Fred GRIMACES. Slam is repeating his earlier words. One of the kids steps up to Slam.

KID #2

You're just saying that because you know you're never getting adopted. You know why? Because you're mean.

Slam's face drops, hurt. But then, he gathers himself and JUMPS on the kid, starting a FIGHT.

BACK TO FRED

Upset. He steps away from the globe.

WILLY

Not good. Easiest way for a kid to get on the naughty list - disparage Santa. It's an absolute no no. I'm embarrassed to say it, but at my darkest moments I wish more kids would be naughty. Naughty kids don't get presents. Our jobs would be so much easier if --

FRED

Of course the naughty kids don't get presents. That's perfect, Willy. The nice kids get everything, as always. You have no idea what that kid's life is like. He's not a bad kid, he's just been treated unfairly ... you know what, forget it. I'd like to just get to work.

WILLY

There's the Christmas Spirit.

FRED

Thanks, Willy.

WILLY

No, really. There's the Christmas Spirit.

Fred turns. The Christmas Spirit cheerleaders stand at the front of the workshop, cheering/caroling.

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

He knows when you've been sleeping, he knows when you're awake ...

The entire workshop JOINS in. Fred GROANS.

FRED

Doesn't anybody know any other songs?

WILLY

Santa Claus is Coming to Town is definitely the crowd favorite.

The cafeteria is filled with cheer and joy. Everyone SINGS happily. Fred is about to vomit. Suddenly, he realizes something. He marches through the singing crowd to a TABLE at the far end of the workshop.

The table is lined with presents. Fred TOSSES some aside. Finally he sees it - the LONG LIST Santa was looking at earlier, from Timmy Beckford in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Meanwhile, the room is finishing the song.

ELF

One more time! One more time!

Elves begins HOLDING UP lighters in the air as if at a rock concert. Just as the room starts again, we hear a WHISTLE. Everyone stops and turns to the source: Fred.

FRED

So listen. If I'm gonna be stuck here for a bit, we're gonna have to do something about this song.

Bob and Linda, the postal workers we met earlier, STAND.

LINDA

What do you have against Santa Claus is Coming to Town?

BOB

It's so catchy!

FRED

It's a fantastic song. Really. But the thing is: all I've heard since I've been here is Christmas music.

DJ Donnie leans in.

DJ DONNIE D

You are in the North Pole, Man.

FRED

So? You think in England they only listen to the Beatles? You think New Orleans only has Jazz? We've got to expand your horizons. We've got to open your ears to new sounds. We've got to stop playing that God-forsaken song over and over again.

Fred bends down and grabs A BOOM BOX. This is the item he took from the pile.

WILLY

Where'd you get that?

FRED

It's for that kid in St. Paul with the fifteen page list.

LINDA

You stole a gift?

FRED

The kid's getting a trampoline, a remote control car, a remote control boat, a new set of soccer cleats, and a Playstation. He's not gonna miss a fifty dollar piece of junk radio.

A MUSCULAR ELF stands up.

ELF

Hey, I built that radio.

FRED

And you did a fantastic job. Love that you're still holding out hope that the cassette tape is gonna make a comeback. Don't give up on that.

(then)

Now I want you to listen to something.

Fred PUSHES play. A RHYTHMIC BEAT starts playing. It's the hard-edged rap song, "Lose Yourself" by Eminem.

ON ELVES

Stunned silent. They don't know what to make of this. A pair of ELDERLY ELVES cover their ears, horrified.

LINDA

It sounds ... angry.

BOB

I know.

(then)

I like it.

Slowly heads begin BOUNCING. Just slightly at first.. Then more. DJ Donnie D begins BEAT BOXING. Fred smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S RESIDENCE - MEANWHILE

Santa and Mrs. Claus sit nervously on one side of an elegantly dressed dining table. Santa's brow is sweaty. Why? Because opposite them sits CLYDE NORTHCUTT, the efficiency expert.

Clyde is an overly serious-looking man - his ALL-WHITE SUIT is immaculate. His GLASSES are black and thick. Even his facial structure is rigid. In front of him sits his omnipresent BLACK NOTEBOOK. This is where Clyde will always write his findings down.

MRS. CLAUS

So, Mr. Northcutt ... or would you rather I called you Clyde?

CLYDE

No.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh. Okay. Well, how was your flight? I trust you enjoyed the sleigh?

CLYDE

For the life of me I do not understand why in this day and age you wouldn't just use a charter plane service. The reindeer and sled was a noble concept before air travel had been invented, now it's simply anachronistic and unreliable.

Clyde writes again in his notebook. Santa is panicking, eating furiously.

~~SANTA CLAUS~~

(to Mrs. Claus)

We're dead. We're dead.

Mrs. Claus places her hand on Santa's arm, calming him.

MRS. CLAUS

Are you enjoying your gingerbread? It's home-made.

CLYDE

I despise gingerbread.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh. Well, I'm sure we can --

Santa is almost gone.

SANTA CLAUS

(whispering)

He hates gingerbread? All we have up here is gingerbread. What's he going to eat if we don't have gingerb --

Mrs. Claus STUFFS a piece of gingerbread in Santa's mouth, stopping him mid-sentence.

MRS. CLAUS

So, how long do you expect to be staying with us, Mr. Northcutt?

Clyde takes off his glasses.

CLYDE

I'm going to be very honest with you Mr. and Mrs. Claus. I do not expect this to take very long. Children are being marketed to at a much younger age nowadays: Winnie the Pooh on diapers, Spongebob Squarepants on pajamas. It is my belief that in a day and age of children who are programmed to be greedier, the North Pole and your elves are no longer capable of handling the Christmas operation. The higher-ups are already constructing a computerized warehouse on the outskirts of the North Pole, and upon my recommendation, will shift Christmas production there, outsourcing the rest. When this happens, you may rest assured that Santa will get a generous severance package as well as an opportunity to consult on a limited basis.

~~The Clauses don't know how to respond. Santa sits, wide-eyed, the piece of gingerbread still stuffed in his mouth. Finally he removes the bread and responds.~~

SANTA CLAUS

Mr. Northcutt, I'm confident that when you see the elves in action you'll see how valuable they are. They're hard at work as we speak. Let's go visit them!

Santa is regaining his confidence.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Bring your little notebook, Clyde.
You're going to want to remember what you see there.

CUT TO:

INT. WORKSHOP - TWO MINUTES LATER

Eminem BLARES on the radio (You better lose yourself/in the music/the moment/You own it/You better never let it go ...)

The elves are huddled in a mob in the middle of the cafeteria, PUMPING THEIR ARMS to the music in unison.

DJ Donnie D is SCREAMING along with the song.

The secret service elves are banging against one another, MOSHING with Fred.

Linda and Bob are GRINDING against each other - the equivalent of Elf-Dirty-Dancing.

A REINDEER (DANCER) even MOONWALKS across the floor.

ON THE CLAUSES

Watching, stunned. Santa's mouth is hanging wide open.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh Lord.

Clyde is frantically SCRIBBLING in his notebook. It's Santa's ultimate nightmare. He tries to stop it.

SANTA CLAUS

Ho, ho, ho!

Nothing. No one hears him over the music.

~~SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)~~

Ho, ho, ho!

Nothing. Santa marches to the boom box and shuts it off.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

HO, HO, HO, DOSH GARNIT!!!

Everything stops. Bob, currently mid-air (his legs wrapped around the waist of his wife), FALLS to the ground with a resounding THUD.

SECRET SERVICE ELF

Big Red has entered the mosh pi --
cafeteria.

The elves quickly gather into place and begin CHANTING:

ELVES

Here comes Santa Claus/here comes --

SANTA CLAUS

Oh stop it.

Awkward silence. Clyde is scribbling away.

FRED

Relax, Bro, they were just having a
little fun. Letting loose.

SANTA CLAUS

(covering, too much)

Of course, of course. We're all about
fun here at the North Pole. Fun, fun,
fun!

(a beat, uncomfortable)

Now I want to introduce you all to
someone. This is Mr. Northcutt. He's
visiting on behalf of the higher --

Clyde COUGHS. Santa turns to him. Clyde shakes his
head. Santa nods, understanding. He covers.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Mr. Northcutt is visiting from the higher
institution of Harvard University. He's
doing his ... uh, his --

MRS. CLAUS

(helping)

Thesis.

SANTA CLAUS

Yes. He's doing his thesis on the North Pole and is here to research how we do things. He'll be wanting to interview most of you so please be at his disposal.

MRS. CLAUS

For his thesis.

SANTA CLAUS

Yes. Thank you, Honey.

(a beat, then)

That will be all. Please resume your work.

Like that, the elves SCATTER. Santa peers over Clyde's shoulder, trying to read his notebook. Clyde COVERS it up, as if Santa is a kid trying to cheat on a test.

CLYDE

You were right, Mr. Claus. I will certainly remember what I saw here.

Before Clyde exits, he stops near Fred.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Mr. Claus. If you have a moment I'd like to speak with you. I believe you might be a valuable source of information for --

Santa quickly pulls Fred away from Clyde.

SANTA CLAUSE

No, no, no. I'm very sorry but I have urgent business to discuss with Fred. Urgent, urgent, North Pole business. Life and death stuff. It involves ... stocking stuffing.

CLYDE

Oh. Perhaps later, then.

Clyde EXITS. Once he's gone, Santa grabs at his right arm, in a bit of discomfort.

MRS. CLAUS

Are you okay, Hon'?

SANTA CLAUS

I'm fine.

MRS. CLAUS

You need to get some exercise, Nicholas.

~~SANTA CLAUS~~

I know, I know. Hey Fred, could I talk to you for a minute?

FRED

No can do. Gotta get back to the naughty-nice department. Those darn kids better be good for goodness sake, or I'm taking the little buggers down.

SANTA CLAUS

Hey, you may be my big brother but I'm still the one wearing the red suit. Don't make me pull rank.

CUT TO:

INT. RAQUETBALL COURT - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Santa and Fred stand in the middle of the court. Santa is wearing a red velour sweat-suit, goggles, and his Santa hat. Fred is miserable.

SANTA CLAUS

So, Fred? About this afternoon. It's important that right now the elves stay extremely focused. I can't get into why, but it's just very important.

FRED

Won't happen again.

Fred SERVES. The ball goes right past Santa.

SANTA CLAUS

Good shot. Couldn't get to that one.

(a beat, then)

I'd like to tell you why. Do you want to know why? No, I shouldn't say. Just know that I'm under a great deal of stress right now.

FRED

Please. Like you know stress.

Fred SERVES again, harder. Right past Santa, again.

SANTA CLAUS

Another winner.

(then)

What do you mean by that? "Like you know stress?" What does that mean? Are you under a lot of stress?

FRED

Just forget it.

SANTA CLAUS

I'm your brother, Fred. You can talk to me. Does this have anything to do with you being in jail --

Fred SERVES even harder. Again, right past Santa.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Okay, that's enough for today. Don't want to overdo it right away.

FRED

Listen, Nick. You forced me to come up here. I came. I did what you asked, so you win. As always. Now let it be.

SANTA CLAUS

I'm not trying to win. I just want this to be a nice Christmas for you.

FRED

A nice Christmas? I've spent the last seventeen hundred years hating Christmas and avoiding coming here. No offense, but the last place I want to be for Christmas is here, with my family.

Santa pauses, almost looking past Fred.

SANTA CLAUS

In that case, you probably shouldn't turn around.

Fred turns around, looking back ...

OUTSIDE THE GLASS.

Where Mother and Father Claus stand, WAVING. Fred's look says it all: "you've got to be kidding me."

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RED NOSED DINER - THAT NIGHT

A sign on the door reads, "Closed for Santa."

INT. THE RED NOSED DINER - CONTINUOUS

The Claus family (Fred, Santa, Mrs. Claus, Mother Claus, and Father Claus) sit at a booth.

Fred is squeezed in on one side next to his brother.
~~Fred and Santa speak in HEATED WHISPERS.~~

FRED

I can't believe you invited them.

SANTA CLAUS

I didn't. I accidentally mentioned you
were coming, that's all.

FRED

Do you talk to her everyday? You're such
a Mama's boy.

SANTA CLAUS

Am not.

FRED

Are to.

MOTHER CLAUS

(interrupting)

So, Fred? How have you been?

FRED

Fine.

MOTHER CLAUS

That's nice.

(to Father Claus)

Isn't that nice, Hon'?

Father Claus, still a man of few words, just NODS.

SANTA CLAUS

Fred is doing a very nice job down in the
Naughty-Nice workshop. The elves tell me
he's one of the hardest workers they've
ever seen.

MOTHER CLAUS

That's good, that's good. I would think
he's probably a very hard worker,
considering ...

She lets that hang there. Fred looks up. It's not hard
for him to be baited by this woman.

FRED

Considering what?

MOTHER CLAUS

Nothing.

Fred shakes his head. He looks to his father who just
stares back down at his food.

FRED

Do you have something to say, Mother?

MOTHER CLAUS

Don't be difficult, Frederick. I just think it's odd that you couldn't find it in you to come to celebrate your parents' anniversary. Your brother threw such a party.

SANTA CLAUS

He sent a lovely gift, though. That massage chair looked very expensive.

MOTHER CLAUS

That massage chair was very expensive. And it came from you, Nicholas. You don't think I know my own son's handwriting? You don't think I've discovered that every year you get a separate gift for us and forge your brother's name on the card?

Fred looks at Santa. He didn't know that. Santa looks down, embarrassed.

MOTHER CLAUS (CONT'D)

Don't be ashamed, Nicholas. It's a lovely thing you do for us. A saintly thing. My little Saint Nicholas.

FRED

(under his breath)

Here we go.

MOTHER CLAUS

I'm sorry, Fred. What was that?

FRED

Nothing.

Mother Claus TSSKS and turns toward Santa. He looks saddened by the line of questioning.

MOTHER CLAUS

Sweetie, you've barely touched your food.

Santa's plate is almost entirely empty. Mother Claus begins scooping some of her meal onto Santa's plate.

MRS. CLAUS (SANTA'S WIFE)

I wish you wouldn't do that, Elaine.

MOTHER CLAUS

Do what, Dear?

MRS. CLAUS

Force-feed him. Nicholas needs to lose weight.

MOTHER CLAUS

Nonsense.

MRS. CLAUS

Have you not noticed how much weight he's gained since last time you saw him?

MOTHER CLAUS

He's perfect. He's got a lovely physique.

SANTA CLAUS

I probably could stand to lose a few pounds, Mom.

MOTHER CLAUS

Don't be silly. Eat, eat.

Mother Claus redirects her attention towards Fred.

MOTHER CLAUS (CONT'D)

So, Fred? I take it you've lost another job?

FRED

That's right, Mother. Can't hold one down.

MOTHER CLAUS

And that girlfriend of yours. The meter maid? I can't help but notice she isn't here.

FRED

Good eye, Mother. She broke up with me. Anything else?

Mother Claus SIGHS.

MOTHER CLAUS

I just wish you could be a little more like your brother, that's all.

This does it.

FRED

Okay, I'm out of here.

~~Fred THROWS down his fork and goes for the dramatic exit.~~
Unfortunately, he's stuck against the wall and Santa blocks his way out of the booth. GRUNTING, he SQUEEZES by his portly brother and marches out of the diner.

EXT. THE RED NOSED DINER - CONTINUOUS

Fred STORMS out of the diner. He hits the ice and SLIPS on his butt. A HAND comes out of nowhere and helps him up. The hand belongs to Clyde Northcutt.

FRED

Thanks.

Once upright, Fred moves past Clyde. Clyde catches up.

CLYDE

Santa Claus' brother. Now that's a tough beat. My brother is a doctor and I don't hear the end of it. I imagine it must often feel as if you don't even exist.

This stops Fred in his tracks. Stopping his momentum once more causes him to SLIP. Again, Clyde helps him up.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

I just don't know how you stay so "Santa-positive." He treats you so badly.

FRED

No, he actually means well. I mean, here I was having financial problems and he flew me all the way up to help me.

CLYDE

Please. He flew you here during his busy season to remind you how well he's doing. He couldn't have flown you up during summer, when it's forty below zero in the middle of July and everyone's bored? He wanted you to see him in action.

FRED

Like I said, there were financial issues. And he's paying me generously for my work.

CLYDE

What, a few grand? Do you even realize what an enterprise Christmas is? If he really wanted to help you, he could have cut you in on the family business years ago. I mean, you are a Claus aren't you?

FRED

Yeah, but he doesn't care about material things --

CLYDE

He cares about his vacation home in the South Pole. He cares about the private home theatre he and the wife are building. He could do a lot more for you than make you come work for him. You can't tell me the thought hasn't crossed your mind.

FRED

Of course it's crossed my mind. It's not like I've ever gotten a break in life. He gets them all. It certainly feels like I'm overdue.

CLYDE

You're a better man than I, Fred. You ask me: you're the saint in the family. You're the brother who deserves all the accolades and all the fame. Heck, maybe even all the money.

As Clyde sees Fred's wheels turning, he turns away. Once Fred can no longer see his face, we see Clyde's expression change. His somber face breaks into an ever so slight, ever so sinister, SMILE.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - MINUTES LATER

Fred stands in front of the snowglobe, looking at it.

ON SNOWGLOBE

A BOY sits at the dinner table with his PARENTS.

BOY

Mother? Father? I've eaten all my broccoli as you asked. May I clear the table before heading upstairs to do my homework?

MOTHER

You may, Daniel.

ON FRED

~~Who shakes his head. He looks up at the "Nice List,"~~
where he finds the listing for DANIEL TELLEM. It reads:
"A near perfect child. The definition of nice."

Fred looks at a PILE OF GIFTS at his feet, labeled "For Daniel Tellem." He closes his eyes. He can't believe he's thinking about this. He begins to FANTASIZE.

CUT TO:

INT. NAUGHTY-NICE DEPARTMENT - EVENING (FRED'S FANTASY)

Fred stands in front of the wall. He looks over his shoulder, sees that the coast is clear, and begins changing all of the "Nice" kids to "Naughty."

CUT TO:

INT. REINDEER BARN - LATER

Fred secretly dumps ARMLOADS OF PRESENTS (once belonging to "nice kids") into the vacant reindeer barn.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - LATER

Where Fred HANDS OVER one of Daniel's toys to a STRANGER. The man hands Fred CASH in return. Fred smiles.

INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - LATER

Where Fred hands Quince a suitcase filled with cash. They hug.

CUT TO:

EXT. EXOTIC ISLAND - WEEKS LATER

A sign reads, "Santaless-Ville." Fred and Wanda lay on a private beach in gigantic lounge chairs, sipping drinks with LARGE UMBRELLAS in them.

BACK TO:

INT. NAUGHTY-NICE DEPARTMENT - PRESENT

Fred SNAPS out of his fantasy. Screw it. He hits a button on the screen, switching Daniel Tellem to the "Naughty" list. Fred SIGHS. He clearly feels guilty.

INT. WILLY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fred marches into the bedroom and FLIPS on the light.

FRED

Willy, wake up.

Willy JOLTS out of bed. He's got bad bed-head.

WILLY

Wha? Huh? What's wrong?

FRED

I need a drink.

INT. FROSTY'S TAVERN - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Fred is drunk and slightly slurring. EMPTY GLASSES rest on the bar in front of he and Willy.

FRED

I deserve a break, Willy. I mean, everything is always about Nicholas. You know, it is true: from the second he was born, it's like I ceased to exist.

Fred BANGS his glass on the bar.

FRED (CONT'D)

Frosty! Another egg nog!

Frosty approaches.

FROSTY

I think you might have had enough, Son.

FRED

I'll tell you when I've had enough, Frosty!

(then, to Willy)

Ah, enough about my problems. What's your story, Willy? I notice you sleep alone in bunk beds. No girlfriend?

WILLY

I'm married to my work. Besides, I've never been real good with the ladies.

FRED

You kidding me? Willy, you're a stud. You could probably get any girl in this whole place.

WILLY

Not the one I want.

Willy CHUGS the rest of his egg nog.

FRED

Who's the girl?

WILLY

(softly)

Charlene.

FRED

No kidding? Santa's little helper?

WILLY

Yep. I love her. I love her brain. She's got a sexy brain.

Willy BURPS.

FRED

So, what's the problem?

WILLY

Well, aside from the fact that she doesn't know I exist, there's this little kicker: the woman has almost two feet on me. I just had to go and fall in love with the one non-elf in the whole village.

FRED

So, she's tall. So what? Make the first move. You've got to put it out there, Willy. Ask her to dinner or to dance or something.

WILLY

I can't dance.

They sit in silence for a long moment. Fred takes a long pull on his egg nog.

FRED

Yet. You can't dance, yet.

CUT TO:

INT. FROSTY'S TAVERN - MOMENTS LATER

Frosty the Snowman stands behind the bar, WATCHING something.

FROSTY

This is a new one.

ON DANCE FLOOR

Where Willy has his arms wrapped around Fred's waist. They're swaying gently to the song, *Lady in Red*.

FRED

Now you've got short arms. That's a good thing. You have no choice but to get close. Pull me in. Give me goosebumps.

Willy pulls Fred close.

FRED (CONT'D)

Now, look me in the eye.

WILLY

I'm four foot three, Fred.

FRED

Compensate.

Willy looks up.

FRED (CONT'D)

Good, good. I got goosebumps. Now here's the key. You want to transition into seduction. A lot of guys come on too strong, too quick. So let's showcase what you've got. Can you sing?

WILLY

I used to be lead caroler.

FRED

Good. Observe.

Fred goes into performance mode, singing along. He's way over the top, having fun with it. Willy LAUGHS.

FRED (CONT'D)

I've never seen so many men ask you if
you wanted to dance/looking for a little
romance/given ha---aaaalf a chance ...
and then, once you've got her hooked, you
swing her, you dip her, and you kiss her.

Fred SWINGS Willy, DIPS him, and stops. His face is just
inches from Willy.

ON FROSTY

Who removes his COAL EYES from his face, unable to watch.

BACK TO FRED AND WILLY

Inches from each other.

FRED (CONT'D)

We'll skip the kiss for now.

WILLY

Good call.

Fred lets Willy up.

FRED

Now we just have to get her down here.
Willy, call everyone you know. We're
throwing a Christmas party.

CUT TO:

INT. FROSTY'S TAVERN - MINUTES LATER

The entire bar is full of elves, drinking egg nog and
chatting. Fred sits at the bar watching Willy.

ON WILLY

He stands off to the side of the bar, gazing adoringly at
Charlene. Charlene is chatting with a circle of elves.
Willy takes a DEEP BREATH. This is it! He MARCHES
toward her ... and RIGHT PAST her. He continues in a
straight line toward the bar and sits down next to Fred.
Fred just stares at him.

WILLY

(embarrassed)

Wasn't feeling it.

Fred shakes his head. Clyde approaches and sits next to
them at the bar. He holds his ominous notebook.

FRED

Hey. I owe you one for letting me vent earlier. I don't really talk about that stuff too often. Buy you an egg nog?

CLYDE

No thanks.

FRED

Don't drink?

CLYDE

Lactose intolerant. But I could use your help gathering up the elves. I was hoping to interview everyone here tonight.

FRED

No problem.

Willy STANDS, his attention still focused on Charlene.

WILLY

Alright. Here we go. I'm doing it!

Willy MARCHES toward Charlene. She's still dancing.

WILLY (CONT'D)

Uh, Charlene?

CHARLENE

(searching)

Oh, hi --

WILLY

Willy.

CHARLENE

Willy. I'm so sorry.

WILLY

Oh, don't be. So I was wondering if -- actually, I was hoping you might want -- the thing is, would you like to ... be interviewed by the guy doing his thesis?

CHARLENE

Sure.

WILLY

(too quickly)

Awesome.

Willy smiles weakly, turns, and walks back to the bar. He sits next to Fred and begins chugging his egg nog. Without looking up, Willy knows Fred's staring at him.

WILLY (CONT'D)

She's taller than you. I freaked.

CUT TO:

INT. FROSTY'S TAVERN - OVER THE NEXT THREE HOURS

Where Clyde (off-camera) conducts SIXTY MINUTE-ESQUE INTERVIEWS with the elves. Linda and Bob are first.

CLYDE (O.S.)

Wouldn't your job be easier if you could answer children's letters via email?

BOB

Santa believes it's important for children to hand-write their own letters. In this computerized age, it's way too rare for a child to actually sit down and write something by hand.

CLYDE (O.S.)

So basically, Santa isn't moving ahead with the times?

LINDA

No, no, no. That's not what he said.

CLYDE (O.S.)

It's not?

Linda and Bob look confused.

JUMP CUT TO:

THE ELDERLY ELVES INTERVIEW

CLYDE (O.S.)

I understand you two have become too old to really work anymore.

ELDERLY MALE

(deaf)

Wha!?

CLYDE

But you're still on Santa's payroll?

ELDERLY FEMALE

Wha!?

CUT TO:

CHARLENE'S INTERVIEW

CLYDE (O.S)

So you're Santa's Little Helper? What do those duties entail?

CHARLENE

Basically, I run his life. I keep track of his entire schedule.

CLYDE (O.S.)

So Santa forgets things a lot?

CHARLENE

Oh, yeah. He's such a scatter-brain. That's what I'm here for.

CLYDE (O.S.)

I see. So in your opinion, it's quite possible that Santa Claus is suffering from early on-set Alzheimers?

CUT TO:

SECRET SERVICE ELF INTERVIEW

They sit in a rigid line.

CLYDE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

So how many of you work Santa's detail?

SECRET SERVICE ELF

Four, Sir.

CLYDE (O.S.)

Have there been many attempts on Santa's life?

SECRET SERVICE ELF

No.

CLYDE (O.S.)

Yet there are four of you. Let me ask you something: is Santa paranoid?

CUT BACK TO:

LINDA AND BOB'S INTERVIEW

Still going. They're sweating now.

~~CLYDE (O-S.)~~

So basically, Santa is a paranoid delusional who may, or may not, be suffering from early onset Alzheimer's. He makes his hirings based on family relations, fires nobody, and refuses even the most basic of technological advances in his workplace. .

Linda and Bob stare into the camera, uncomfortable.

LINDA

We really just wanted to dance.

We REVEAL Clyde for the first time since the interviews began. He closes his notebook. He looks around the bar. In the corner, elves are FUNNELING Fred egg nog and CHANTING. Clyde smiles, sinisterly. He's getting everything he wants and more.

INT. SANTA'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Santa's ALARM goes off. He shuts it off before it wakes Mrs. Claus. He kisses the back of her head and gets up.

INT. SANTA'S BUILT-IN CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Santa stares at his line of red Santa suits.

SANTA CLAUS

(to himself)

What to wear, what to wear?

(then, convincing himself)

I haven't gained that much weight. I'll prove it.

Santa begins trying on suits from different eras. They're all too tight: A SANTA ZOOT SUIT, A SANTA BELL-BOTTOM SUIT, A SANTA TIE-DYE HIPPIE SUIT. Nothing fits. Santa has gotten fatter. He SIGHS.

INT. SANTA'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Santa brushes his teeth, he looks at himself in the mirror. He looks at his white hair.

Santa peeks out door of the bathroom. Mrs. Claus is still sound asleep. Santa reaches under the sink and pulls out a secret stash. It's not cookies this time. It's a bottle of HAIR DYE. Santa smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - MINUTES LATER

Santa (wearing a way-too-tight SANTA DISCO SUIT) enters the workshop with a hearty ...

SANTA CLAUS

Ho, ho, ho!

Only to find ...

SANTA'S POV

The elf party after-math. Elves are sprawled all over. An elf lies on his back, a glass resting on his chest.

A female elf has a mustache and drawn on her face.

Fred and Willy sleep on the conveyor belt, cuddling, going round and round. Fred is wearing an elf hat.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

What is going on here!?

Everyone STIRS, waking up. Hungover. GROANS.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

I don't believe this.

Fred, groggy, stands up. He's still going round and round on the conveyor belt.

FRED

We had a little party last night, Bro.
Things got a little wild and --

Fred's voice FADES out as he disappears from sight on the conveyor belt. It FADES BACK IN as he reappears.

FRED (CONT'D)

-- one egg nog and then another and
before I knew it, it was raining elves.

Santa shakes his head. He turns around. Behind him stands Clyde, scribbling away in his notebook.

SANTA CLAUS

I shouldn't have to remind you all that
our biggest day, December 23rd, is just
days away. All toys need to be
completed, wrapped, and packed in the
sleigh. This is the time of year when we
need to be absolutely focused and --

~~As Santa lectures, he absentmindedly removes his Santa~~
 hat, to scratch his head. Doing so, reveals his new head
 of JET BLACK HAIR.

In unison, the elves SCREAM. Santa quickly puts the hat
 back on.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Back to work!

The elves SCRAMBLE away. Santa approaches Clyde.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

I'm going prematurely white.

CLYDE

M-hmm.

SANTA CLAUS

I was just trying something out. It's
 not permanent.

Nothing from Clyde.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

I'm gonna go wash it out.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - OVER THE NEXT THREE DAYS

We watch as Fred and the elves scramble to get everything
 built in time for Christmas. Action is covered by the
 song, *Twelve Days of Christmas*.

ON BUILDING ELVES

Frenetically building toys and sending them down the
 assembly line.

ON TESTING ELVES

Testing the toys. An elf gently places a doll on the
 table, setting it just right. He pulls out a HAMMER and
 WACKS the doll over the head. When it doesn't fall
 apart, he gives the builders a THUMBS UP.

ON NAUGHTY-NICE DEPARTMENT

Santa looks over Fred's shoulder. As soon as Santa
 leaves, Fred looks at some DESCRIPTIONS on the Nice List:

- "Lisa Alper, star student, helps less gifted with
 homework." Fred changes her to "naughty."

~~- "Michael Weaver, visits sick grandmother every day and reads to her. She's not even his grandmother." Fred changes him to "naughty."~~

- "Nicky Ernst, does chores for irresponsible brother. Doesn't tell parents." This one really strikes a nerve. Fred angrily changes him to "naughty" as well.

IN THE CLOSET

Where Fred stuffs away more toys. The closet is overflowing with toys of once "nice" children.

ON CLYDE

Watching everything, always writing in the notebook. We are left to wonder: is Clyde seeing what Fred's doing?

ON SANTA

Watching Clyde. We are left to wonder: is Santa seeing what Clyde is seeing?

BACK TO FRED

Standing at the snowglobe. He looks over his shoulder, leans in toward the snowglobe, and whispers ...

FRED

Wanda Blinkowski.

ON SNOWGLOBE

Which shows Wanda, in her meter-maid garb, writing a ticket. A GOOD-LOOKING MAN comes running out toward her.

MAN

Ah, c'mon. Cut me a break here. I was just inside for a minute, buying a gift for my nephew. I got him a fire truck. He wants to be a fireman.

WANDA

Well, too bad he wasn't with you when you parked in front of this fire hydrant.

Wanda continues writing the ticket.

ON FRED

Who smiles, loving this.

BACK TO SCENE

Where the man also smiles at Wanda.

MAN

Fine. We'll compromise. You can give me the ticket. But if you do, you have to let me take you out to dinner.

ON FRED

Not smiling anymore.

BACK TO SCENE

Wanda is caught off-guard.

WANDA

Oh, no, I, uh, I can't.

MAN

You have a boyfriend? Husband?

WANDA

(a beat, sad)

No.

MAN

You eat?

WANDA

Yes, but, I'm not a dater. The whole concept of ritualistic dating is just an concept created by restaurateurs who --

ON FRED

Who mouths along with her.

FRED

-- need to make sure that their establishments are kept full on Friday and Saturday nights.

BACK TO SNOWGLOBE

MAN

Okay. Then we'll have to make it lunch on Thursday. Deal?

Wanda hesitates. Finally, she smiles.

WANDA

Okay.

ON FRED

Stunned.

FRED

Okay!?

Fred SLAMS his hand on the globe and it shuts off. Suddenly, a loud ALARM sounds. Fred turns. Elves are gathering around the "Ten Most Naughty" board. Fred approaches and PUSHES through the mob. He finds Willy.

FRED (CONT'D)

What's going on?

WILLY

Big day. A new kid has taken over the number one most naughty spot.

ON BOARD

A picture of Slam fills the number one slot. Fred reads the description: "Mean to all children, constantly disparaging Santa, puts himself before all others, won't eat green vegetables. Naughty, naughty, naughty."

BACK TO FRED

Who turns away, unable to look. He's about to say something when ...

Santa's Secret Service Elves ATTACK Fred from out of nowhere, flying in from all sides. Within moments, Fred's face has been WRAPPED and TAPED in wrapping paper, his arms DUCT-TAPED behind his back. Fred's SCREAMS are muffled by the wrapping paper.

SECRET SERVICE ELF

(into headset)

Big Red's Big Bro is secure. I repeat,
Big Red's Big Bro is secure.

The Secret Service Elves remove a screaming Fred from the room. After a long beat, the other elves go back to work as if nothing has happened.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDISCLOSED ROOM - MINUTES LATER

The four secret service elves place a screaming (still muffled) Fred on a CHAIR. Once he's seated, they remove his duct-tape handcuffs. Fred immediately reaches for the wrapping paper covering his face and TEARS it off.

FRED

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT FOR?!

~~Fred goes quiet, stunned by what he sees.~~

FRED'S POV

His entire family sits in a line of chairs, directly in front of him. With them sits a BESPECTACLED MAN and an even more shocking new visitor - Wanda.

FRED (CONT'D)

(shocked)

Wanda?

WANDA

(dazed)

Well, it's definitely more north than Canada.

Fred turns to his family, searching for an explanation.

MOTHER CLAUS

We're having a family intervention, Frederick. After the display you put on yesterday at dinner, we felt we had no choice. Isn't that right, Father?

Father Claus SHRUGS.

FRED

You had me attacked and smothered!

MOTHER CLAUS

Oh, stop being difficult, Frederick. We put holes in the wrapping paper so you could breathe. Now your brother has flown in someone we think can help you.

FRED

Oh, is that right, Brother?

Santa Claus looks down, embarrassed.

SANTA CLAUS

She made me.

FRED

And you do whatever Mommy wants you to do don't you?

SANTA CLAUS

Do not.

FRED

Do so.

MRS. CLAUS

Stop it you two.

Mother Claus turns toward the BESPECTACLED MAN.

MOTHER CLAUS

Fred, this is Dr. Goldfarb. He's a pre-eminent therapist in New York City and he's here to help you with your problems.

FRED

I don't have problems. Wanda, can you please tell them I don't have problems?

WANDA

(still dazed)

I'm a little busy absorbing all of this, Fred. Twenty minutes ago Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer was peeing on my foot.

SANTA CLAUS

I'm still not sure this is a good idea, Mother. We usually don't allow outsiders in the North Pole.

DR. GOLDFARB

Mr. Claus --

SANTA CLAUS

(correcting him)

Santa's fine.

DR GOLDFARB

Oh. Right.

(then, awkward)

Santa. I'm bound by doctor-patient privilege to reveal nothing about this session. I'm pretty sure no one would believe me anyway.

SANTA CLAUS

(searching memory)

Goldfarb, Goldfarb. It's funny, I don't remember ever delivering to you.

DR GOLDFARB

I'm Jewish, Sir.

SANTA CLAUS

Ah. Of course. I'm good friends with Hanukkah Harry. Quite a chess player. Please pass him my regards if you see him.

~~DR. GOLDFARB~~

Uh, okay.

MOTHER CLAUS

Mr. Goldfarb, as we spoke about on the phone, my son Frederick is quite unhappy. He's got no career to speak of, a string of failed relationships, and I suspect he blames us in some way. I'd like you to fix him as quickly as possible.

DR. GOLDFARB

Is this true, Fred?

FRED

This is ridiculous. She's been riding me my entire life.

(re: Father Claus)

And he never says anything.

DR. GOLDFARB

(to Father Claus)

Is that true?

Father Claus opens his mouth to answer but --

MOTHER CLAUS

He's a man of few words. My son's unhappiness isn't his fault and it isn't mine.

FRED

Of course not. Everything is my fault.

MRS. CLAUS

I have to say, it does seem we often focus on Fred's problems and ignore those of my husband.

MOTHER CLAUS

Oh, don't be silly. Nicholas has no problems. He's perfect.

Mrs. Claus SIGHS and turns toward Dr. Goldfarb.

MRS. CLAUS

Dr. Goldfarb, my husband is bordering on obese. I worry about his health, and the fact that his mother is constantly telling him he's perfect --

MOTHER CLAUS

He's shapely.

MRS. CLAUS

(undeterred)

That kind of thinking prevents him from ever taking action.

SANTA CLAUS

I have been feeling sluggish lately. And I can't fit into any of my old suits anymore.

(then, shyly)

I've been looking into gastric bypass.

MOTHER CLAUS

What!?

SANTA CLAUS

It's becoming a rather standard procedure, Mother. They put a staple in your stomach and --

MOTHER CLAUS

This is nonsense! Your weight is part of you. You were a large baby and you've grown into a large man. Now our focus here should be Fred's problems.

FRED

See how quickly she gets it back to me, Dr. Goldfarb?

Everyone turns to Dr. Goldfarb. He's clearly overwhelmed by all of it. He TAKES A BREATH and gathers himself.

DR. GOLDFARB

We'll address Santa's weight, but this intervention is for Fred. I want to start by --

Wanda has come out of her daze. She looks up.

WANDA

I have a question.

SANTA CLAUS

Rudolph's pee will come out in the wash. It's just like regular pee.

Everyone turns toward Santa briefly, then returns their attention to Wanda.

WANDA

(to Fred)

Why didn't you tell me?

FRED

That I'm Santa Claus's brother? Would you have believed me?

WANDA

(genuine)

If you told me? If you took me here? Yes, Fred. I would have believed you.

DR. GOLDFARB

I believe her, Fred. I believe that she would have believed you. Do you?

FRED

(softly)

Yes.

DR. GOLDFARB

So why didn't you tell her?

FRED

I don't know.

DR. GOLDFARB

Fred.

FRED

I don't know!

DR. GOLDFARB

Fred.

FRED

BECAUSE SHE'D NEVER LIKE ME AS MUCH AS SHE LIKES HIM! NOBODY DOES!

Silence. Fred has gotten to the core of everything.

WANDA

How could you think that, Fred? Don't you know how much I loved you?

Fred takes this in. He seems on the verge of letting go of his anger, his resentment. But then, he hardens ...

FRED

Don't you have a date to get to Wanda? The guy with the fourteen year old nephew and the nice hair?

WANDA

Fred, don't do this --

FRED

You really must have loved me, Wanda.
Took you a whole week to get a new
boyfriend. Or are you so desperate that
you'll just go out with anyone who asks?

Wanda's face drops.

WANDA

This was a mistake. I'd like to go home,
now.

SANTA CLAUS

Wanda, hold on. I'm sure if you --

WANDA

I'd like to go home now.

Wanda EXITS. Everyone is left in awkward silence.

DR. GOLDFARB

Well, I think we've made some real
progress here. With time I believe --

Santa interrupts, almost talking to himself and to Fred.

SANTA CLAUS

I never realized it before. You hate me.

FRED

(exhausted)

I just want to be eight years old again.
I want to talk to my bluebird in my tree
you chopped down and never come down. I
don't hate you, Bro. I just wish you
were never born.

Without another word, Fred EXITS.

CUT TO:

EXT. REINDEER BARN - THAT NIGHT

The wrenching song, *Blue Christmas* covers the action:
(*I'll have a blue Christmas that's certain/ and when that
blue heartache starts hurtin'/You'll be doin' alright,
with your Christmas of white/ but I'll have a blue, blue
Christmas.*)

In the distance, a line of HEADLIGHTS approach the North
Pole. As the headlights shine closer they LIGHT UP a
SHADOWY FIGURE. It's Fred. He's waiting outside the
barn. He looks downcast, miserable.

~~The vehicles come to a stop. We realize what they are~~
 REPO TRUCKS! Men exit the truck - it's Otto and a few others, Fred's fellow Repo Men. As Blue Christmas wails on, Fred greets the men and leads them inside.

MOMENTS LATER, the men exit, each carrying armloads of toys. The toys are loaded onto the trucks.

OVER THE NEXT FEW HOURS we watch (with Fred) as the Repo Men do their thing: taking possession of toys once destined for the "nice" children of the world.

FRED

Remember, tell Quince that after he gets what I owe him, I get half of everything else he sells. And keep the trucks quiet until you pull away. You know how to get out of here?

OTTO

Turn around, left at the Red Nosed Diner, right at the Candy Cane Tower, then South until we hit the real world.

FRED

That's it.

Otto takes one last look around.

OTTO

Man, the wife is gonna freak when I tell her about this. I always thought re-po'ing Milli Vanilli was gonna be the highlight of my career.

FRED

(half-hearted)

Yeah.

They SHAKE. The vans PULL AWAY. Fred is left there alone. We've seen him low before, but never this low. You'll be doin' alright, with your Christmas of white/ but I'll have a blue, blue Christmas.

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - NEXT MORNING

Everyone in the workshop is going at full tilt. Our POV is Fred's, as he sadly watches everyone work.

ON BUILDER ELVES

Who have finished building toys, and are now transferring them to WRAPPING STATIONS.

DJ DONNIE D (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Elves and Elves,
it's D-Day here in the North Pole.
That's right, the eve of Christmas Eve,
the night before the night before
Christmas: December 23rd. Reminder from
Santa: all toys must be completed,
wrapped, and piled in the Toy Room in
order for the sleigh to be packed
tomorrow. And now a song that's really
shooting up the charts - it's *Silent*
Night here on NP100.

ON WRAPPER ELVES

Wrapping the toys feverishly. One elf suffers a paper
cut and SCREAMS. He's quickly pulled off the line and
attended to by a medic.

ON TOY ROOM

Where wrapped toys slowly begin piling up, ready to go.

ON MRS. CLAUS

In the bakery, rushing. Running out of time, she pulls
out a box of ENTENMENN'S COOKIES. She debates putting
them on a round plate, passing them off as home-made.

INT. TOY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We PAN a mountainous pile of WRAPPED GIFTS.

We PULL BACK from the toy pile. Santa and Willy walk
around the pile.

SANTA CLAUS

So what do you think, Willy? Are we
going to get done in time?

FRED (O.S.)

We are done.

Fred stands toward the side. Santa and Fred look at each
other. After last night, things are clearly awkward.

SANTA CLAUS

That can't be. We're never done a whole
day early.

WILLY

The credit belong so Fred. He ran a very
tight shop this year.

 CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

We love Freddie, yes we do! We love
Freddie, how about you?!

The whole workshop CHEERS. Fred's expression says it
all: never has a man felt guiltier. Santa realizes
something.

SANTA CLAUS

Wow. A whole day early!?

(realizing)

Wait till I tell Clyde! There's no way
he'll be able to shut us --

(catching himself)

-- shut us up, cause we'll be bragging so
much about our productivity! For his
thesis.

Willy and Fred look at Santa strangely.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Willy, might I have a moment with my
brother?

Willy nods and EXITS. The two brothers are left alone in
silence, neither knowing how to begin. Finally ...

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

You did well here, Fred. It was really
important that production run smoothly,
especially this year. You made it
happen.

FRED

(feeling guilty)

You don't have to thank me.

SANTA CLAUS

So ... yesterday was intense.

FRED

Definitely intense.

Awkward silence. Neither brother knows how to apologize.
Santa glances up at the TOP TEN MOST NAUGHTY BOARD. Slam
still sits at number one. Santa tries to lighten things.

SANTA CLAUS

Look at that. A new most naughty. I
tell you, Fred, I've never understood
them. I guess they're born cruel or
wired wrong or something. Such a shame.
Is it really that difficult to be nice?

Without realizing it, Santa has hit a nerve.

FRED

Unbelievable. You just don't get it, do you?

SANTA CLAUS

Get what?

FRED

He's not wired wrong - he's been treated wrong. I was that kid!

SANTA CLAUS

I don't understand what you're --

FRED

You know, for a Saint you're pretty damn insensitive. You're self-righteous, and holier than thou, and you know what? YOU HAVE GAINED WEIGHT SINCE I SAW YOU LAST!

Fred storms away, stopping only for one last yell ...

FRED (CONT'D)

AND FOR THE RECORD: YOU SHOULD WEAR BLACK, NOT RED! BLACK IS SLIMMING!

With that, Fred storms out.

CUT TO:

EXT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Fred STORMS away from the building, MUMBLING angrily.

FRED

I guess they're born wrong, I guess they're wired wrong, think's he's sooo --

BAM! Something SMASHES into Fred's back. He turns and sees Santa. Santa stands there, red-faced and furious.

SANTA CLAUS

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH THAT HURT MY FEELINGS?! DO YOU EVEN REALIZE HOW LONG I'VE BEEN BATTLING A WEIGHT PROB ---

BAM! Snow, all over Santa's face. Fred has fired back.

FRED

YOU'RE COMPARING YOUR WEIGHT TO MY PROBLEMS! DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG I'VE BEEN PLAYING SECOND FIDDLE TO YOU AND YOUR --

~~BAM! BAM! Back to back snowballs: one to the face, one~~
to the crotch. Fred GOES DOWN.

SANTA CLAUS
JUST BECAUSE I'M A SAINT DOESN'T MEAN I
HAVE TO TAKE YOUR ABUSE! I'M SICK OF IT!
IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU TAKE RESPONSIBILI --

Santa freezes mid-scream, seeing ...

SANTA'S POV

Four snowballs head directly toward him in SLO-MO. He
prepares to absorb the blow as, out of nowhere ...

Santa's Secret Service Elves DIVE into frame from all
sides - taking the four "bullets" for their "president."

SECRET SERVICE ELF
(into intercom)
I have four elves down. I repeat, four
elves have been hit. We are forming a
shield. I repeat, we are forming a
shield.

The elves quickly get up and form a HUMAN SHIELD around
Santa. Santa PUSHES them away.

SANTA CLAUS
Step down, Boys.

SECRET SERVICE ELF
We can't allow that, Sir.

SANTA CLAUS
That's an order. This one is mine.

ON FRED

He's storming away. He walks past the RADIO STATION,
angry and breathing hard. A ROAR approaches from behind.
Fred turns ...

FRED'S POV

Santa (wearing his helmet) is racing after him in his HO-
HO-HO-MOBILE. He looks manic. He's got a HUGE SNOWBALL
in his hand. As he passes Fred, Santa SLAMS the snow
into Fred's mouth.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)
NOT SO FAT NOW, AM I BROTHER?

Santa turns his vehicle around, preparing for another run
at Fred.

~~ON RADIO-STATION WINDOW~~

Where DJ Donnie is watching, reporting what he sees.

DJ DONNIE D.

(into microphone)

We interrupt our broadcast with this
special report: Santa and his brother
Fred are about to kill each other. Now,
back to Joy to the World.

BACK TO FIGHT

The Ho-Ho-Mobile races back at Fred. Fred braces
himself. At the last moment, he DIVES into the sidecar.
Taking his eyes off of the road, Santa begins STUFFING
snow into Fred's pants. Fred SCREAMS.

Hanging from the sidecar, Fred stuff snow into Santa's
hat. Santa SCREAMS.

It's an all-out snowball war.

CUT TO:

EXT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Linda and Bob are dragging a bag of letters outside.

BOB

I didn't expect this many last minute
letters. We have to get them to the
workshop, ASAP.

LINDA

I'm going as fast as I can, Bob.

BOB

(seeing something coming)

Linda, MOVE!

LINDA

I told you! I'm going as fast as --

BOB

MOVE!

Bob DIVES, knocking Linda out of the way of the SPEEDING
HO-HO-HO-MOBILE. The bag of letters SPLATTER everywhere.
Linda and Bob lie on the ground in silence.

BOB (CONT'D)

That's it. We're getting e-mail next year.

CUT TO:

EXT. FROSTY'S TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Frost EXITS the tavern, coming to see what the commotion is. Fred and Santa are MID-BATTLE in the speeding Ho-Ho-Mobile, their eye-sight obscured by snow, ice, and letters to Santa (as if tarred and feathered).

The machine is RACING toward Frosty at top speed - they don't see him. And just when it looks like Frosty will get plowed ...

The Ho-Ho-Ho-Mobile CRASHES into a huge snowbank right in front of Frosty, sending Fred and Santa FLYING out. The impact sends a SHOWER of snow on Frosty.

FROSTY

(refreshed)

Ah. That hit the spot.

ON FRED AND SANTA

WRESTLING on the ground. Fred gets the upper hand. He pushes Santa's face into the snow.

FRED

(like a gleeful child)

How you like that, Bro?! Whitewash!

Santa FLIPS Fred off him. Before Fred can react ...

FRED'S POV

Santa's gigantic butt is coming down toward his chest.

SANTA CLAUS (O.S.)

Earthquake!

Santa LANDS on him with a gigantic THUD. He rolls off.

The brothers lie on their backs in the snow, staring up at the sky. They're BREATHING HARD, too exhausted to fight anymore. After a long silence, Fred speaks.

FRED

(exhausted)

You're larger than life, Bro.

SANTA CLAUS

I swear by all things holy if you call me fat one more time I will catch my breath, renounce my Sainthood, and beat you to death.

FRED

I'm complimenting you, Jackass. You're like this larger than life ... thing. You're Santa Claus. An icon. A great man. I wish I wasn't jealous. But I am.

Santa CHUCKLES, too exhausted to fight anymore. His chuckle evolves into hysterical LAUGHTER.

FRED (CONT'D)

This is funny to you?

SANTA CLAUS

It really is. You know why? Because I've always been jealous of you.

FRED

Of me? Yeah right.

SANTA CLAUS

It's true. I mean, for starters you've got this fantastic metabolism.

FRED

My metabolism isn't that fantastic.

SANTA CLAUS

You know what I would give to pull off a pair of flat front chinos like you do?
(a beat, then)

And you're honest. You speak your mind, tell it like it is. I wish I could be like that. But I can't.

FRED

Because you're a Saint?

SANTA CLAUS

No. Yes. I don't know. I do it to myself, I guess. Always need to make everyone happy. To be perfect. It's like a disease. Just once, it would be nice to ...

Santa trails off.

FRED

What?

SANTA CLAUS

To be the guy whose brother worries about him, instead of the guy who worries about his brother. And his parents. And every child in the world. It's exhausting. I'm fat, I'm old, and I'm exhausted.

Fred looks at his brother. Santa is just lying there staring up at the North Pole sky. He does look exhausted, emotionally and physically.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

I know it's selfish. I know it's not "Saintly." But just once, one time, I'd like to be the guy who gets the presents instead of the guy who gives them. Santa Claus never gets a present.

Santa stands. He reaches into his jacket and pulls something out - A PACKAGE.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Speaking of which: here.

Santa TOSSES Fred the package.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas.

Santa turns and walks away. As he does, he CLUTCHES at his right arm, in obvious discomfort.

FRED

Bro --

Santa just keeps walking away. Fred turns and looks at the HUGE BODY INDENTATION Santa has left in the snow. It's sad, touching even. In the middle of the indentation, lies Fred's gift. Fred takes it in his hands and unwraps it: It's a BIRDHOUSE: an exact replica of the one he lost as a child. Inside is a note that reads: "To the Best Big Brother a guy could ask for. I'm sorry I cut down your tree. Nick."

Fred CLOSES his eyes and lies back in the snow.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTH POLE - LATER

Deeply shaken, Fred walks by himself, clearing his head. He's well outside the center of the North Pole. In the distance, he spots a BUILDING, faraway. Fred heads toward it, curious.

INT. MYSTERIOUS BUILDING - MINUTES LATER

Fred ENTERS, astounded at what he sees in front of him: it's a GIGANTIC ROOM with COTTAGE CHEESE CEILINGS. The room is filled with corporate-styled CUBICLES.

A banner hangs over the room reading, "NORTH POLE, INC."

Fred looks toward the center of the room. Clyde is leading around a group of WHITE-SUITED MEN (THE HIGHER-UPS). They don't see Fred.

Clyde approaches a small ROBOT. The robot sits in front of a small TABLE, filled with nuts and bolts.

CLYDE

This is our prototype for the robot that will replace all the elves next season. I guarantee they will increase productivity one hundred fold. Observe.
(then, commanding)
I-pod.

The robot FLURRIES. Within seconds, he hands Clyde a completely constructed I-pod.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

DVD Player.

Another FLURRY. The robot presents a DVD player.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Barbie.

One final FLURRY. The robot hands over a Barbie doll. Just when we think the robot is done ...

ROBOT

(in robot voice)
Don't forget the Dreamhouse.

The robot hands a DREAMHOUSE over ...

ROBOT (CONT'D)

Or Ken.

And a KEN DOLL. The higher-ups APPLAUD. Clyde notices Fred, excuses himself, and approaches him.

FRED

What is this?

Clyde looks over his shoulder. The coast is clear.

CLYDE

Well, if anyone in the North Pole is going to be happy to hear the news, I suspect it will be you.

(smiling)

I am an efficiency expert. I was sent here by the higher-ups to determine whether or not your brother's operation was still capable of handling the Christmas toy load. After my time here, I've become convinced it cannot.

FRED

You're shutting him down?

CLYDE

It has to be done. However, I've been having trouble convincing the higher-ups. Many of them still cling to their infantile worship of your brother. Even when I told them of his ineffective leadership and the slipshod work ethic of his elves, they wouldn't budge.

Fred breathes a SIGH OF RELIEF.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

But when I told them about what I saw you doing? About how a new employee - Santa's brother of all people - was put in charge of a major department, and then misused his power for his own financial gain - they couldn't say no. I actually owe you a great deal of thanks.

FRED

You used me? No. You can't do this.

CLYDE

Don't worry. You can keep the money you make off the toys. It's a write-off for us, and the cost is well worth what we'll be saving in future years.

Clyde PATS Fred on the back.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Your wish has come true, Fred. I've put your brother out of business. Starting December 26th, there is no more Santa Claus.

~~Clyde EXITS, leaving Fred alone. What the hell has he done?~~

CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

The elves are PARTYING, celebrating completion of their season. Willy stands in the front of the room, GAZING at Charlene. He gathers his courage and approaches.

WILLY

Charlene, uh I just wanted to say: well, I wanted to say that, uh, you did a really great job this year. It was very impressive.

CHARLENE

Aren't you the sweetest thing?

(a beat, then)

I'm so sorry, I forgot your name. I don't know where my head is lately.

WILLY

(deflating)

Oh, that's okay. It's Will --

Willy is interrupted by the NAUGHTY-NICE ALARM we heard earlier (when Slam took over the Most Naughty position). Instantly, a RUSH of elves separates him from Charlene. Willy SIGHS and follows the crowd.

CUT TO:

INT. NAUGHTY-NICE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The elves are gathered around the NAUGHTY-NICE BOARD. We STAY WITH WILLY as he pushes through. Up front we ...

REVEAL FRED

Standing in front of the board, a solemn look on his face. A PICTURE OF FRED has taken over the number one position on the Most Naughty List.

FRED

I have something to tell everyone.

Fred GATHERS himself. This won't be easy.

FRED (CONT'D)

For the past week, I've been secretly moving kids from the nice list to the naughty list. I took all those extra toys and sent them to New York to be sold. In two hours I will be a rich man.

Silence. Finally, Bob steps forward.

BOB

I knew you were no good from the second I met you. What kind of person doesn't like Santa Claus is Coming to Town? It's so catchy.

FRED

There's more. That guy Clyde actually works for the Higher-ups. He knows what I did, and he's convinced his bosses to shut down the North Pole and fire Santa and all you elves. You are all going to be replaced by robots in two days.

Everyone begins BUZZING, upset and frantic.

DJ DONNIE D

Omigod. What are we going to do? This is the only thing we're qualified for.

BOB

I'm gonna wind up being a stand-in for some ten year old on a crappy sitcom. I just know it.

FRED

We can fix this. Now understand, no one is going to sleep for the next twenty-four hours. We'll have to rebuild all the toys I sent out in one night.

MURMURS from the crowd.

BOB

It can't be done.

The Christmas Spirit members start CHEERING. There's no emotion in their voices. It's almost monotone.

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

We can do it yes we can if we can't do it no one can. Yay.

It's a pathetic display which rouses no one.

FRED

We have to do this, Guys. Not for me. Not even for you. We have to do this for Santa. We have to do this for Santa because the guy has spent the past seventeen centuries thinking about other people ahead of himself. Because he's got a sweating problem but he still puts on that heavy wool red suit every day and never complains. We have to do this for Santa because I once promised him I'd be the best brother in the world, and I haven't kept that promise. I have to do this for Santa. WE HAVE TO DO THIS FOR SANTA!

A few elves NOD. More join in. Slowly, a few start CLAPPING. Then a few more. The music SWELLS. Soon, everyone is ROUSED.

FRED (CONT'D)

Good. Willy, you're in charge. Get the toy stations reopened. You'll need someone good with numbers to help.

Fred WINKS at Willy.

FRED (CONT'D)

Charlene. You're with Willy.

Willy's mouth DROPS open. He looks at Charlene, meekly.

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

(with enthusiasm)

WE CAN DO IT, YES WE CAN. IF WE CAN'T DO IT, NO ONE CAN! YAYYYYY!

Fred smiles, relieved.

FRED

There's the Christmas Spirit.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - OVER THE NEXT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

DJ Donnie PUSHES a button on a boom box. Eminem's *Lose Yourself* covers a MONTAGE as Fred and the elves working.

AT BUILDING STATIONS

Where elves work feverishly, building new toys.

ON FRED

~~Who stands by a clock, nervous. The clock reads 8:32 PM.~~

AT WRAPPING STATIONS

Where elves wrap toys. A bead of SWEAT runs down the face of an elf onto a package. The elf quickly wraps tape around his forehead, a psuedo-headband.

BACK TO FRED

Still by the clock. It now reads 10:42 PM.

AT TESTING STATIONS

Where an exhausted elf hops on a UNICYCLE, trying it out. As soon as he's seated, he FALLS ASLEEP. He tips over, crashing to the floor. Other elves run to him.

AT A NEW YORK CITY STARBUCKS

Where Willy ENTERS in full elf gear, drawing stares from CUSTOMERS. He approaches a young BARISTA at the counter.

WILLY

My company is pulling an all-nighter. I need six thousand lattes to go.

The Barista looks at Willy, blankly.

WILLY (CONT'D)

Is this gonna take long? My sleigh is double-parked.

OUTSIDE THE WORKSHOP

Where the elves place a final WRAPPED TOY in the sleigh. They're done! Elves COLLAPSE all over the ground, exhausted. Willy turns to Fred and gives him an exhausted THUMBS UP. Fred smiles. We END THE MONTAGE.

CUT TO:

EXT. SANTA'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Fred RUSHES toward Santa's door. The Secret Service Elves block his path.

FRED

I have to see my brother immediately.

Nothing. They don't budge. Fred tries PUSHING through. The Secret Service Elves JUMP on Fred, hanging on him like a jungle gym. One of them gets Fred in a HEADLOCK.

HEADLOCK ELF

(into headset)

I am applying the noogie. I repeat, I am
applying the noogie.

The elf starts giving Fred a NOOGIE.

FRED

Owww!

Mrs. Claus opens the door. Fred pushes the elves off.

FRED (CONT'D)

Annette, I need to see him.

MRS. CLAUS

(grave)

He's not well, Fred. The doctor is
looking at him. Come on.

Fred FOLLOWS Mrs. Claus inside.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Santa lies in bed. He has a thermometer in his mouth.
Dr. Goldfarb is examining him. He looks weak. Fred
approaches the bed.

FRED

You okay?

Santa REMOVES the thermometer.

SANTA CLAUS

Nothing a few hours in bed won't cure.
I'll be out in the sleigh by tomorrow
night.

DR. GOLDFARB

Oh, no, Santa. I'm afraid that you
won't. You may have had a minor heart
attack.

SANTA CLAUS

But Christmas Eve is --

MRS. CLAUS

Nicholas, you heard the doctor.

DR. GOLDFARB

(correcting)

Family therapist.

MRS. CLAUS

Well, you heard him. Your health is the most important thing.

(then)

Dr. Goldfarb, would you excuse us for a moment?

Dr. Goldfarb NODS and EXITS. Fred KNEELS next to his brother.

FRED

Listen to me, Nick. I know about Clyde. Why didn't you say anything?

SANTA CLAUS

I didn't want everyone to worry.

FRED

I know. But I screwed up.

SANTA CLAUS

By selling the toys?

Fred does a DOUBLE-TAKE, shocked.

FRED

You knew!? He wants to shut the whole operation now! If you knew, why didn't you stop me?

SANTA CLAUS

I had faith.

FRED

In what?

SANTA CLAUS

In you. I had faith you'd come around.

FRED

My God, you are a Saint.

(then)

Listen, it's gonna be okay. The elves worked through the night and the sleigh is ready to --

MRS. CLAUS

It's over, Fred. My husband is not getting out of this bed.

Fred looks down. Suddenly, a LIGHTBULB goes on. And Fred Claus does something we never expected to see him do: he steps up.

FRED

Then I'll do it.

MRS. CLAUS

What?

FRED

Deliver the presents. Be Santa Claus.

SANTA CLAUS

You can't, Fred. It's impossible.

FRED

Hey, I may not be a Saint, but I'm the blood relation of one. Some of that had to rub off. In a very, very subtle way.

SANTA CLAUS

It could be very dangerous. It took me years just to master the chimney landing.

FRED

I'm doing it.

Santa looks to Mrs. Claus. She SHRUGS.

MRS. CLAUS

I don't see any other way, Nicholas.

Santa NODS.

SANTA CLAUS

Okay.

FRED

(rousing himself)

Okay!

Fred heads to the door, then STOPS.

FRED (CONT'D)

Oh, if I'm going to be Santa, I do have one condition.

MRS. CLAUS

Oy vey.

FRED

This year, every kid gets a present. Even the naughty ones. The naughty kids are the ones who need the presents, Bro.

Santa smiles and NODS. Fred smiles back.

FRED (CONT'D)

About yesterday: I'm --

SANTA CLAUS

Me too.

And that's it. That's all the two brothers need to say.
Fred EXITS. Mrs. Claus and Santa sit there in SILENCE
for a moment. And then ... Santa POPS up out of bed.
He's not sick at all.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Did I tell you he'd step up?

MRS. CLAUS

(smiling)

You were right, Babe.

Santa does a little JIG.

SANTA CLAUS

Mama, go put on that new nightgown. I
know it's been a while, but Santa's
feeling a little naughty.

MRS. CLAUS

Ooh, Nicholas!

Mrs. Claus smiles and SCAMPERS into the bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - CHRISTMAS EVE

The elves stand around, waiting. Many of them are asleep
on their feet.

WILLY

Remember everyone. He's gonna be
nervous. Try and be positive.

The DOOR opens. The elves TILT their heads,
synchronized, trying to figure out what they're seeing.

ELVES POV

Fred stands there, wearing his brother's SANTA SUIT.
He's swimming in it.

FRED

We probably should have thought to get
this taken in.

Silence. No one seems to know what to say.

FRED (CONT'D)

Well, this is it. I want to thank you all for your hard work the past twenty-four hours. I'll try and make you all proud.

Charlene steps forward. She hands Fred a container of PEPTO-BISMOL.

CHARLENE

If each child, on average, leaves one and a half cookies, you're looking at eating well over one point two billion cookies.

FRED

Well, at least the suit has room.

Donnie steps forward. He hands Fred an EMINEM C.D.

DJ DONNIE D

For the ride. I added some DJ Donnie beat box in the background. Takes it to the next level, I think.

Linda and Bob step forward.

LINDA

The chimney landing takes decades to master.

Bob hands Fred a PILLOW.

BOB

It'll ease the fall. Strap it to your butt.

FRED

(touched)

Thank you, Bob.

FRED (CONT'D)

Willy, you coming?

Willy looks up, surprised.

WILLY

Me?

FRED

You're my guy. I know you're tired. I know the trip could be dangerous. But I need you.

Willy NODS. He steps through the crowd, SHAKING HANDS and GIVING HUGS as he heads away with Fred.

They start walking toward the door. But suddenly, Willy ~~STOPS and TURNS AROUND.~~ Fred looks at him, unsure what he's doing.

Willy, with purpose, MARCHES over to a work table. He grabs a CHAIR and DRAGS it over to Charlene. He STEPS up on the chair. They're face to face.

WILLY

I'd hate to die without doing this.

And like that, Willy (just as Fred taught him) SWINGS her, DIPS her, and plants a MOVIE STAR KISS on a stunned Charlene. He finishes the kiss, hops down off the chair, and walks right passed Fred.

WILLY (CONT'D)

(as he passes)

Bet she'll remember my name now.

Willy, stud, EXITS. Fred smiles and follows him.

CUT TO:

INT. SLEIGH - MOMENTS LATER

Fred and Willy sit in the front of the sleigh. Fred grabs the reins. They're about to take off, when ...

There's a KNOCK on the sleigh window. Fred turns. His parents stand outside. Fred LOWERS the window.

MOTHER CLAUS

I don't know what you're trying to accomplish here, Frederick. You've already gotten your brother sick with your toy embezzling scam... must you really try to --

FRED

Ma, I'm on a pretty tight schedule here. Maybe you could make me feel bad about myself later?

MOTHER CLAUS

There he goes. Always being difficult. For the life of me --

FATHER CLAUS (O.S.)

Enough!

Everyone turns toward Father Claus, stunned that he has dared to speak.

FATHER CLAUS (CONT'D)

For God's sake, Elaine! It's enough already! I can't stand around and watch you behave like this anymore.

FRED

Dad, you've been standing around watching my entire life. Think you could hold off for another twenty-four hours? We're really in a rush.

FATHER CLAUS

No!

(to his wife)

I want you to tell him why you treat him like this. Why you always favored Nicholas.

MOTHER CLAUS

Dear, you're embarrassing me in front of the little elf driver.

FRED

Dad, really. It's okay. Honestly, I'd probably love Nick more than me, too. So if we could just get going --

MOTHER CLAUS

(surprised)

That's what you think? That I love him more?

FRED

No. I don't know. Can we just --

MOTHER CLAUS

Frederick, you're my first-born. And you were always... well, you were always like me. Tough. A little rough around the edges, but a survivor. Your brother was like your father. Sweet. Too sweet for this world, maybe. And so fat. I knew how cruel kids could be about his weight. So maybe I was more nurturing to him. But that doesn't mean I loved you any less. I love you very much.

Fred looks at his mother, touched. Willy leans in.

WILLY

Fred, we should really be in Australia by now.

FRED

(to his parents)
I've got to go.

Mother Claus leans in and KISSES Fred on the cheek.

MOTHER CLAUS

If you're not going to be back in time
for dinner, I expect a phone call.

FRED

Ma, I'm gonna be pretty busy --

MOTHER CLAUS

I don't think that's too much to ask. A
mother worries.

Mother Clauss RUBS her lipstick off his cheek. Fred
smiles at his father and SNAPS the reins.

FRED

Ho!

The reindeer SHOOT up into the sky as Fred SCREAMS. Once
Fred is airborne, Father Claus gently places his arm
around Mother's Claus's shoulders.

FATHER CLAUS

I think it's important that you finally --

MOTHER CLAUS

(interrupting)
Oh, enough already, Herbert. You're
starting to give me a headache.

CUT TO:

INT. SLEIGH - ONE HOUR LATER

Willy and Fred are stopped in the SKY, well above Earth.

FRED

Admit it, Willy. We're lost. We just
passed Pluto again. We've been going in
circles for an hour.

WILLY

Santa normally navigates. I don't
understand. We did exactly what the GPS
said.

Willy PUSHES a button on the dash. The GPS VOICE talks.

GPS VOICE

Australia. Left turn in point one miles.

WILLY

(frustrated)

WE DID THAT!

FRED

Maybe we should just stop and ask for directions.

WILLY

I don't know if that's allowed.

CUT TO:

INT. PARIS COFFEE SHOP - MINUTES LATER

A CASHIER sits behind the counter, reading a magazine. Suddenly, he hears a CRASH on his roof. He looks up, shakes his head, then returns to his magazine.

Moments later, the door DINGS, signaling the arrival of a customer. The cashier looks up and finds Fred (in full Santa gear) and Willy (in full elf gear).

WILLY

Bonjour. Uh, my French isn't really so ... could you tell us which way Australia is?

FRED

And could I use your bathroom real quick? It's gonna be killer getting this suit off once we get rolling.

Off the cashier's confused look we ...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - LATER

Fred and Willy stand next to the chimney. Fred's arms are filled with GIFTS. One gift is really large.

WILLY

Okay, your first house. You all set?

FRED

Wally Durst: Melbourne, Australia, ten years old. Surfboard, new basketball, and the second season of Friends on DVD. Stocking to be stuffed with candy.

WILLY

Allergies?

FRED

None.

WILLY

(correcting)

Peanuts.

FRED

Damn. Sorry.

WILLY

Don't apologize. Santa never has to apologize.

Fred GATHERS HIMSELF and JUMPS down the chimney.

CUT TO:

INT. CHIMNEY - CONTINUOUS

Fred is hanging from the surfboard which is wedged sideways in the chimney.

FRED

Okay, not a good start.

Now, we watch as Fred delivers gifts all over the world.

AT A FIREPLACE

Where Fred lands (on his pillow-padded butt) and LOOKS UP. On a couch opposite him sits a family of stunned HASIDIC JEWS.

FRED (CONT'D)

(calling up)

Willy! Wrong house again!

WILLY (O.S.)

(calling back)

Sorry!

FRED

(to family, explaining)

It's my first day. Shabbat Shalom.

Fred heads back up the chimney.

AT ANOTHER FIREPLACE

~~Where Fred lands and LOOKS UP. A SEVEN YEAR OLD BOY is~~
staring at him, his mouth wide open.

FRED (CONT'D)

Timmy Beckford, St. Paul, Minnesota?

Timmy NODS.

FRED (CONT'D)

So we finally meet. You probably don't realize this, but you've been a big conversation point in the North Pole.

Timmy is still staring, mouth AGAPE.

FRED (CONT'D)

Here's the thing, Timmy. You asked for an awful lot this year. And that lizard torture thing didn't help your case. But I know you're a good kid. I hear you spent all the money you made at your lemonade stand on a Mother's Day gift. So I'm hooking you up, okay?

Timmy NODS.

FRED (CONT'D)

The trampoline's out, though. I can't get that thing through the chimney.

Timmy NODS again. He approaches Fred and hands him a GIANT PLATE of cookies.

FRED (CONT'D)

Alright, fine. You can have the trampoline but you have to pretend I never saw these cookies.

They SHAKE on it.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - MEANWHILE

Santa is watching Fred on the SNOWGLOBE. He smiles.

CLYDE (O.S.)

It doesn't matter what he does, Mr. Claus. In two days, I'll have shut the North Pole down.

Clyde stands behind Santa. Santa doesn't turn around. Clyde walks away triumphantly.

~~SANTA CLAUS~~

Clyde Northcutt. 422 Dashwood Drive,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Clyde STOPS in his tracks. Santa turns toward him.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

You made the most naughty list in '84.
Very naughty year. You kept fighting
with other kids. Twelve fights in all if
I remember correctly. You asked me for a
Superman cape.

CLYDE

You can't possibly remember that.

SANTA CLAUS

I remember more than you'd think. I
remember that I didn't send you the
Superman cape.

CLYDE

No, you didn't.

SANTA CLAUS

You were very naughty that year.
(a beat, then)
Did you always wear glasses, Clyde?

CLYDE

I don't see what that has to do with --

SANTA CLAUS

Your glasses. Did you always wear them?

CLYDE

(defensive)

Yes. I was cross-eyed as a child.

SANTA CLAUS

Four-Eye Clyde. Isn't that what they
called you?

Clyde's head instinctively lowers, instantly vulnerable.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

And is it possible that after a while of
being called Four-Eye Clyde, you got
angry? Maybe even started a fight or
two? Maybe twelve?

CLYDE

It's possible.

SANTA CLAUS

So you asked for something. A Superman cape, maybe?

CLYDE

Clark Kent wore glasses. But when he turned into Superman ...

SANTA CLAUS

He didn't need the glasses anymore.

Clyde looks down, embarrassed.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

It was wrong of me not to send you the gift. I fear I had an incorrect understanding of naughty children.

CLYDE

If you think an apology will prevent me from shutting you down, you're mistaken.

SANTA CLAUS

I know.

Santa REACHES down. He hands Clyde a GIFT.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

This is a little late.

Clyde OPENS it: it's A SUPERMAN CAPE.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

You want to put it on?

CLYDE

I'm a thirty-five year old man, Mr. Claus. I'm not putting on a --

SANTA CLAUS

Just put it on.

CLYDE

(quickly)

Okay.

Trying to hide his excitement, Clyde dons the cape.

SANTA CLAUS

Glasses off.

Clyde takes off his glasses.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

I was a fat little kid. Kids called me Thick Nick ... So what do you think? You think I could have a hug? Just a friendly display of affection between Thick Nick and Four-Eyed Clyde?

CLYDE

No.

SANTA CLAUS

Just a quick little hug?

CLYDE

It doesn't seem appropriate in light of the --

SANTA CLAUS

Fly to me, Superman.

Instantly, Clyde puts his arms out in front of him and (ala Superman) FLIES to Santa. They hug. Clyde begins CRYING in Santa's chest.

CLYDE

I'm finally Superman.

SANTA CLAUS

Yes you are.

CLYDE

(through tears)

I also asked for a GI Joe Action Figure set that year.

SANTA CLAUS

Let's not press our luck, Clyde.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. ORPHANAGE - MEANWHILE

Fred kneels next to Slam's bed. He RUFFLES his hair.

FRED

(whispering)

Kid?

Slam TURNS in his sleep. He opens his eyes, groggy and half asleep. He doesn't realize it's Fred.

SLAM

Santa? You found me.

FRED

Of course I found you. I find all the good kids. Your gifts are over by the door.

Over by the door is a GIGANTIC PILE of gifts. Slam's eyes WIDEN.

FRED (CONT'D)

I might have gone a little overboard.

(a beat, then)

You need to start behaving again, Slam. I know you've had some crappy breaks, but that doesn't mean the world's a crappy place. The world is what you make of it. We need kids like you to make it a nice place. Kapeesh?

SLAM

(blown away)

Kapeesh.

FRED

Now, back to sleep.

SLAM

Okay. I promise I'll be good from now on, Santa.

Fred smiles and turns to go. Suddenly, he realizes:

FRED

I'm gonna need my wallet back, Slam.

Slam's ARM pops up. He holds Fred's wallet.

FRED (CONT'D)

We'll pretend that didn't happen.

And just like that, Slam's back asleep. Fred COVERS him with the blanket, smiles, and walks out.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - MOMENTS LATER

Fred EMERGES. Willy holds out his hand. They SHAKE.

WILLY

It's been an honor.

SANTA CLAUS

You're a giant among elves, Willy. I just have one more stop I have to make.

WILLY

No problem. Where we going?

FRED

This stop I have to make on my own.

CUT TO:

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - LATER

Wanda sits at a table with her DATE - the man who asked her out previously when she gave him a ticket.

WANDA'S DATE

So basically I work for Smith Barney down on Wall Street. I didn't originally want to be an investment banker but ...

He trails off. Wanda looks lost in thought.

WANDA'S DATE (CONT'D)

Is everything okay, Wanda?

FRED (O.S.)

No, everything's not okay.

Wanda looks up. Fred stands at the table. His Santa suit is attracting stares from the restaurant patrons.

FRED (CONT'D)

Everything's not okay because she should be having dinner with me. She loves me.

(a beat, then)

And I love her.

Wanda looks up, shocked.

WANDA

What did you just say?

Fred, still not comfortable expressing feeling, STOPS a passing waiter.

FRED

I'm gonna need a Double Egg Nog, please. Rocks.

WAITER

Um, we don't have egg nog, Sir.

FRED

What kind of dump is this?

(to Wanda)

Yeah, I said I love you.

(MORE)

FRED (CONT'D)

Don't get me wrong: I still think the whole concept of "love" is just something created by the movie studios so people will go see Leonardo Dicaprio die in the ocean. But that said, I do love you. With all my jaded heart.

WANDA

I love you, too.

Wanda STANDS and KISSES Fred.

WANDA'S DATE

Are you serious right now? You're leaving me for a guy in a Santa costume?

FRED

It would have happened eventually. She'd never fall for an investment banker. Investment banking is a concept created by high-end Universities so that parents who spend hundreds of thousands on college educations can feel validated when their kids get a six figure job straight out of college.

WANDA

He's right.

We FOLLOW Fred and Wanda as they walk away.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

So, Fred managed to save the day AND get the girl. And since he interrupted Wanda's dinner, he even managed to end the night with a quick bite to eat.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACO BELL DRIVE THRU - LATER THAT NIGHT

A CASHIER, not paying attention, leans out the window.

CASHIER

That's a number two number and an oh my God.

HER POV

The sleigh, the reindeer, Fred, Wanda, and Willy sit in front of her window. Dazed, she hands them a few bags.

FRED

Merry Christmas.
(then)

Ho!

The reindeer TAKE off, with Fred SCREAMING as always.
The cashier watches, stunned.

CUT TO:

INT. FROSTY'S TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

We focus on the JUKEBOX. A small finger PUSHES a button.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

As for Willy: upon his return, he finally
got up the nerve to ask Charlene for that
long awaited dance.

Lady in Red begins playing. Willy pulls Charlene in
tight and begins SINGING. She LAUGHS, charmed.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

He gave her goosebumps.

Behind the bar, Frosty watches them. A DROP OF
CONDENSATION runs down his forehead.

FROSTY

Oh oh. It's getting hot in here.

CUT TO:

INT. DJ DONNIE D'S INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

Donnie sits behind his mike, talking to an unseen GUEST.

NARRATOR

DJ Donnie D got his own daily music hour
where he could play anything, not just
Christmas music.

DJ DONNIE D

Don't know if you know this, but you've
got quite a following up here in the
North Pole. Mind taking a few calls?

We REVEAL his guest. It's EMINEM. He smiles.

EMINEM

No problem, D.

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Linda and Bob sit at two laptops, next to each other.

NARRATOR

Linda and Bob finally got email. But
other than that, not much changed.

An INSTANT MESSAGE pops up on Linda's screen. It reads,
"STOP PLAYING SOLITAIRE AND GET TO WORK!"

Immediately, an INSTANT MESSAGE pops up on Bob's screen.
It reads, "If you yell at me in all caps one more time,
you will sleep on the couch tonight. Lol."

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clyde TUCKS himself into bed. He's wearing his Superman
cape.

NARRATOR

Of course, Clyde no longer had it in him
to shut down the North Pole.

CUT TO:

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Clyde is showing Santa and some of the elves how to use
his prototype ROBOT.

NARRATOR

Santa even hired him on a consulting
basis, in an attempt to modernize his
operation.

The robot moves toward Santa. Out of nowhere, the Secret
Service Elves DIVE in and tackle it.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Fred stands next to the chimney. He's signing a card.

NARRATOR

As for St. Nick, well, that Christmas
Santa Claus finally got a present.

The card reads: "To the best little brother a guy could ask for. Remember: black is slimming. Fred." Fred tapes the card to a GIFT BOX and JUMPS down the chimney.

ON FIREPLACE

Where Fred LANDS with a THUD. He brushes himself off and looks up. His MOUTH DROPS. Marvin Gaye is playing.

FRED

Ew.

MRS. CLAUS (O.S.)

FRED, GET OUT!

SANTA CLAUS (O.S.)

Kind of in the middle of something here,
Bro! Think you could come back later?

CUT TO:

INT. ORPHANAGE - MONTHS LATER

Slam sits on his bed, playing with other kids.

NARRATOR

But as I told you before, this is the story of a boy named Fred. And this part of Fred's story ends right here. In a small little orphanage in New York City that he'd been visiting for months.

Fred BURSTS into the room.

FRED

Kid! Kid! Thank God you're here.
Listen we don't have a lot of time!

SLAM

For what?

Fred pulls out Slam's long-lost CRUMPLED TEN DOLLAR BILL.

FRED

I need you to pretend to be my kid.
Here's ten bucks. It's everything I had
in my piggy bank.

Fred HANDS Slam back the ten dollar bill. Slam looks at it, confused. Slowly, he looks back up.

SLAM

Wait, are you serious?

Fred looks at Wanda. She nods at Slam and smiles. Slam
is ~~too~~ shocked to speak. Fred jumps in.

FRED

Okay, fine. You don't have to pretend.
We'll adopt you. Just don't go mushy on
me cause I swear I'll trade you in for a
cuter kid -- oh God, he's going mushy.

Slam is HUGGING Fred. After a beat, Slam pulls back.

SLAM

Let's get one thing straight: I'm not
some cute kid in a bad sitcom. If you're
waiting for me to say things like --
(ala Gary Coleman)
"What'chu talkin' 'bout Willis," you're
wasting your time.

As Fred and Wanda LAUGH with Slam we PULL BACK. And
BACK. And BACK. Until ...

ON SNOWGLOBE

The Claus family has been watching: Santa (in his new
BLACK SUIT AND HAT), Mrs. Claus, and both the Claus
parents. Mother Claus has tears in her eyes. She puts
her arms around Santa.

MOTHER CLAUS

Nicholas?

SANTA CLAUS

Yes, Mother?

MOTHER CLAUS

I really do wish you could be a little
more like your brother.

THE END