

"...SUCH A CLATTER"

A screenplay

by

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FIRST DRAFT
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FADE IN:

ESTABLISHING SHOT

EXT. THE HOUSE OF SCOTT AND LYNN CALVIN - NIGHT

It's winter. The house is decorated with white lights all around the perimeter. A path, shoveled through the snow, leads up to the front door. A wreath welcomes us in.

INT. CALVIN DINING ROOM

The dining table is littered with the remains of a large meal. LYNN CALVIN heads the crew of relatives in the clearing of the rubble. SCOTT CALVIN comes up behind Lynn as she lifts the turkey platter. He gives her a hug.

SCOTT

I love you.

LYNN

Make some coffee.

KITCHEN

Scott enters and begins to make the coffee. Lynn follows with the platter.

SCOTT

Regular or decaf?

LYNN

I love you, too.

VOICE

(OVER, from living room)

Let's open the presents.

Scott and Lynn kiss.

SCOTT

Merry Christmas.

LYNN

Decaf.

LAURA MILLER enters.

LAURA

Get your hands off my sister.

Lynn leaves her husband and runs to her sister.

LYNN
(excited) Laura! I didn't think
you'd make it. Why are you so
late?

SCOTT
Probably couldn't get her broom
started.

LAURA
Nice to see you too, Scotty.

SCOTT
I've asked you not to call me
"Scotty", Laurie.

LAURA
And I've asked you not to--

LYNN
Guys! Come on, it's Christmas.
Can't you call a truce?

Scott is the first one to give in.

SCOTT
Merry Christmas, Laura. Glad
you could make it. (pause)
Where's the headshrinker?

LYNN
Scott!

SCOTT
Sorry. (with an attitude)
Where's your brilliant
psychologist husband?

LAURA
I'm gonna go get some food.

Laura exits.

LYNN
Why can't you be civil with her?

SCOTT
'Cause she hates me.

LYNN
She doesn't hate you.

Scott just looks at Lynn.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Alright. But she's like that
with a lot of people. It's just
her way.

SCOTT
I gotta go get dressed.

LYNN
See you out there, Santa.

LIVING ROOM - SOMEWHAT LATER

The party is now gathered around the piano, singing
carols. Suddenly the lights go out. There are some
squeals of delight from the children.

A VOICE
(in the dark) Look, kids! Over
there, by the fireplace!

A silhouette is seen near the fireplace.

A KID'S VOICE
(in the dark) It's Santa!

The lights come on. Indeed, Santa is near the
fireplace with his bag full of toys. The children
run to him, screaming out, "Santa, Santa!". As the
children get closer, WE SEE that it is Scott dressed
up as Santa Claus.

SCOTT
Ho, Ho Ho! Merry Christmas!

One child, DAVE MILLER, speaks out.

DAVE
What'd you bring me Santa?

SCOTT
What's your name, little boy.

DAVE
I'm Dave. Dave Miller.

SCOTT
Ho, ho ho! Little Davey Miller.
Well, let's see what I've got
here.

Scott reaches into the bag and gets out a Batman
Toy.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Here ya' go.

He hands the toy to Dave. Dave looks at it.

LAURA
What do you say to Santa, honey?

DAVE
This isn't what I wanted!

LAURA
David!

DAVE
But, Mom. I don't like Batman
anymore. I wanted a Robot.

LAURA
Tell Santa thank you.

DAVE
He's not Santa.

SCOTT
Of course I am. Look at me.

Dave goes up close to Scott. He looks Scott square
in the eye. He studies Scott's face.

DAVE
You're not Santa Claus! You're
Uncle Scott!

The other children chime in with, "We want Santa!
We want Santa!".

SCOTT
Hey, come on. Of course I'm
Uncle Scott. Santa called me
and asked me to hand out the
presents.

DAVE

He did not.

SCOTT

Did to.

DAVE

Did not. There's no such person
as Santa Claus. My daddy told
me!

The other children are horrified at this revaluation.
Scott gives NEAL MILLER a dirty look.

SCOTT

Way to go, Doc.

DAVE

Tell him, Daddy. Tell him!

Everyone turns to Neal.

NEAL

I only said that Santa Claus was
more like a state of mind than a
real person. It's that state of
mind that I believe in. The
spirit of Christmas. The
feeling one gets. That's what
Santa Claus is. That's the
belief I endorse.

SCOTT

Well put. I'm sure your seven
year old son appreciated the
endorsement.

LAURA

We try to give Dave a firm grasp
on reality.

SCOTT

Now that's a good idea. We
wouldn't want a bunch of kids
running around using their
imaginations.

LYNN

Maybe you should hand out the
rest of the presents, Santa.

The children respond to this suggestion with relish. Sant hands out the rest of the presents.

LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

All the presents have been opened. Dessert is being served. Some children are asleep on the floor. Other kids are sitting around Scott, still dressed as Santa Claus, who is reading "The Night Before Christmas".

SCOTT

"When out on the lawn there
arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what
was the matter ... "

FOYER - LATER

Some of the families are putting on coats and trying to herd up their children. It's the tail end of the party.

EXT. THE FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Scott, still in the Santa suit, and Lynn stand huddled against the cold and wave good-bye to the last guests to leave. Choruses of: "Drive carefully", "Have a happy new year" etc. are heard. Lynn goes back in the house. Scott follows and closes the door. After a moment, the lights go out.

INT. THE FOYER

LYNN

Let's clean up in the morning.

SCOTT

You go to bed. I'll be just a minute.

LYNN

You're gonna clean up now.

SCOTT

Just a little. Go to sleep.

LYNN

Don't be too long.

SCOTT

Let's have a kid this year.

LYNN
That only gives us a week.

SCOTT
I'm serious.

LYNN
I know.

She kisses him.

LYNN (CONT'D)
I love you in that suit.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

The only sound is the steady HUM of the humidifier. Scott and Lynn are sound asleep. There is a faint NOISE. After a moment, it gets a bit LOUDER. Lynn sits up and listens. She hears the NOISE.

LYNN
Scott.

Scott turns over in his sleep. Lynn nudges him.

SCOTT
Where?

LYNN
What?

SCOTT
What is it?

LYNN
I heard a noise.

SCOTT
I didn't hear ...

There is the NOISE again.

LYNN
There.

SCOTT
What is that?

LYNN
It's coming from outside.

SCOTT

Maybe somebody forgot a kid.

There is a SOUND of a LOUD BUMP from the roof.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Shh!

The ceiling CREAKS.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Somebody's on the roof.

Lynn reaches for the phone.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Don't. Shh. Keep still.

Scott reaches into his bedside table drawer and pulls out a revolver.

LYNN

Scott! Put that thing away!
Let's call the police!

SCOTT

Quiet! Shit, where's the
bullets?

LYNN

No!

There's another NOISE.

SCOTT

Got 'em.

Scott loads the revolver and gets out of bed. Lynn follows him. They both put on their robes and exit.

EXT. BACK PORCH

It's dark. By the NOISE it's clear that there is indeed somebody on the roof.

LYNN

I'm scared. We should call the
police.

SCOTT

Lynn, please!

The full moon is casting deep shadows. Scott moves away from the house and looks up to the roof. They hear a SOUND.

LYNN

(pointing)

There! By the chimney!

Scott looks in that direction and sees a silhouette as it crosses his line of vision.

SCOTT

(shouting)

Hey, you!

THE MAN is startled and loses his balance. He grabs for something, but there's nothing there. He slides down the side of the roof and falls to the ground. Scott and Lynn go to him. The man is lying perfectly still. Scott gives him a little nudge with his foot. The man doesn't move.

LYNN

Oh my god! I'm calling the police.

SCOTT

Wait. Look.

They look at the body. The man is dressed in a Santa Claus suit. They approach him. Scott gently nudges him again; still no movement. Scott turns the man over. The man wears a red hat and white beard. Scott reaches down to take the beard off.

SCOTT

What the...

LYNN

Who is it?

SCOTT

It's real.

LYNN

What?

SCOTT

The beard. It won't come off.

Scott goes through the man's pockets. He finds a wallet. In the wallet is a card.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
This is some kind of joke.

LYNN
Scott?! What do you mean a
joke. The man's dead.

Scott hands her the card he found in the wallet.

XCU: THE NOTE

It reads: "SANTA CLAUS, NORTH POLE".

BACK TO SCENE

LYNN (CONT'D)
What's this mean?

Scott looks through the wallet. He finds another
card.

SCOTT
(reading)
"If something should happen to
me, put on my suit. The
reindeer will know what to do".

There is a SCRAPING SOUND from the roof. They look
at each other. Then, they look up to the roof.

THEIR POV

Now visible, parked next to the chimney is a rather
large sleigh with a huge bag in the back. Harnessed
to the sleigh are eight reindeer.

BACK TO THE SCENE

SCOTT
Let's go inside.

They grab a hold of Santa and begin to drag him.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Scott and Lynn sit on the floor next to Santa.

LYNN
We just can't just leave them up
there.

SCOTT
What do you want me to do? Call
the Anti-Cruelty Society and
tell them that Santa's reindeer
are on our roof?

LYNN
Well we have to do something.

Scott reads the card again. He takes the cap off of
Santa and looks at it.

LYNN (CONT'D)
You can't be serious.

SCOTT
I'm puttin' on the suit.

LYNN
Scott!

SCOTT
I just want to see what happens.

LYNN
Someone'll see you.

Scott takes a moment. He looks at Lynn. He looks
up.

SCOTT
I'm going up there.

EXT. THE BACK YARD - NIGHT

Lynn is holding a ladder. Scott, in Santa's suit,
is climbing up.

THE ROOF

Scott carefully approaches the sleigh. One reindeer
get restless.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Easy, Rudolph.

The reindeer rears up his head. Scott notices a tag
around its neck. It reads: "COMET".

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Sorry... Comet.

Comet calms down. Scott looks in the sleigh. There is a small box on the seat. A sign on the box reads: "OPEN". Scott opens it. Inside is a white beard. He puts it on.

LYNN

(OFF)

Scott! What are you doing?

SCOTT

I'm ok.

Scott gets in the sleigh. The reindeer remain calm. Cautiously, he takes a hold of the reins. There are rows of bells along them. He jingles the reins. The reindeer get restless. Scott remains still. Comet turns his head around and looks directly at Scott. They stare at each other for a moment. Without thinking, Scott takes the reins and shakes them vigorously. The reindeer gallop to the end of the roof and take off. Scott has trouble handling the sleigh. They leave the roof and go right through a large oak tree. As they fly off into the horizon, Lynn is left holding the ladder, looking skyward. She can hear Scott as he shouts out in shock. The YELL sounds a lot like, "Ho Ho Ho."

EXT. THE SLEIGH SOMEWHERE OVER AMERICA - NIGHT

Scott is not so much driving the sleigh as he is just along for the ride.

EXT. THE ROOF OF A HOUSE - NIGHT

The reindeer land on the roof of a quaint house. There's a STILLNESS in the air. Scott takes a deep breath.

SCOTT

Nice ride. What do I do now?

The reindeer don't answer.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Hey, Comet?

Comet turns his head and looks at Scott. Comet then looks at the bag in the back of the sleigh.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Am I supposed to leave something here?

It looks as if Comet nods.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

What do I leave?

No answer. Scott moves to the back of the sleigh. He picks up the bag.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

It's heavy!

The weight of it causes Scott to lose his balance and he braces himself by holding on to the chimney.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

What was that?

Scott notices that his feet aren't exactly touching the ground. In fact he's hovering.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

What the ...!

He rises up and remains hovering over the chimney. Then he gradually begins to descend. He flails a bit but soon realizes that he has no control over his descent. He gets close to the opening in the chimney. Then, almost as if he were no longer flesh and bone, but rather a liquid, he pours down the flue

INT. THE FIREPLACE - NIGHT

Scott's feet are seen coming out of the fireplace, followed by his legs, torso and finally his neck and head. He's in one piece and still holding the bag.

THE LIVING ROOM

Scott finds himself next to a sparsely decorated tree. He looks into the bag.

SCOTT

But, there's ...

He reaches in and pulls out three items: a doll, a toy rifle and a pair of sneakers. He opens the bag up wide. There's nothing else in it. He leaves the three gifts and picks up the empty bag. As before, he's liquified and floats back up the chimney.

EXT. THE ROOF - NIGHT

Scott floats out of the chimney. He crosses to the sleigh and puts the bag in the back.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
That's it then, huh?

Comet looks at him.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Come on! That's all there is.
It's empty. Take me home.

He gets back into the sleigh and snaps the reins.
The reindeer take off.

EXT. THE SLEIGH, FLYING SOMEWHERE - NIGHT

Scott tries to halt the reindeer.

SCOTT
Whoa! Whoa! Ho!

EXT. ANOTHER ROOF - NIGHT

The sleigh glides and touches down gently.

SCOTT
What?!

Comet looks at him.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
It's empty! I left the last
three gifts back there. You're
wasting my time. Take me home.

Comet bucks up. He's angry.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Alright, alright. Fine.

Scott moves to the back of the sleigh and picks up the bag. The bag is heavy again.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
That's funny, I thought ...

Again he finds himself next to the chimney. More hovering and the next thing he knows ...

INT. BY THE FIREPLACE - NIGHT

... he's standing next to the Christmas tree.

SCOTT
What do I do? Leave the bag?

He looks in the bag.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Well, I'll be ...

He pulls out a red fire truck, a soccer ball and Jack-in-the-box. He leaves them under the tree.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Weird.

As he turns to pick up the bag he bumps his leg on a table.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Ow! Sh--

He muffles his curse. He doesn't want to wake anyone. There's been enough bloodshed for one night. He looks on the table. There's a glass of milk and some cookies there. He eats one of the cookies and puts the rest in his pocket. He drinks most of the milk.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
That's good.

Next to the cookies he sees a plate of vegetables; carrots, celery and an apple. He puts them in his other pocket. He grabs hold of the bag and braces himself for the transport.

EXT. THE ROOF - NIGHT

Comet seems restless. So do the rest of the pack.

SCOTT
What's the matter, boy?

Comet rears back his head.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
You hungry?

Comet nods. Scott reaches into his pocket and takes out the vegetables. He feeds a carrot to Comet. Now, all the others want theirs.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
I got plenty. Here you go ...

Scott reads the name tags as he feeds them.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
... Prancer. Donder, Blitzen.
Dasher. Dancer, Vixen. Cupid.

He pets each one. They in turn nuzzle up to him.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
I guess we go on.

Comet turns and looks at the box that's on the seat.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
There's nothing in there, boy.
That's where I got the beard
from. It's empty ...

Scott picks up the box. Something inside rattles.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Doesn't surprise me.

He opens it and finds a pipe and a lighter inside.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
So, Santa's a smoker, is he?
That's not very fashionable
these days.

Scott lights up the pipe.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Hey, nice blend. Ho, this
really hits the spot.
(he takes another
puff)
Ho, ho!

The smoke encircles his head, looking like a wreath.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Well! Come on. There's work to
be done! Now Dasher! Now
Dancer! Now Prancer and Vixen!

He takes his seat and yanks on the reins.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
On Comet! On Cupid! On Donner
and Blitzen!

CLOSE ON Comet who rolls his eyes as if to say,
"We've got a live wire this time!".

They fly off, into the darkness.

MONTAGE - THE REST OF THE NIGHT:

1. Scott comfortably settles into his job.
2. There's more cookies and vegetables.
3. Scott's voice gets huskier as the night goes on.
4. The bag is bottomless.
5. Finally, the first sliver of light peaks out in the east.

SCOTT
(to the reindeer)
'Morning, boys! Ho! Ho! Ho!

The sleigh takes off to a much higher altitude,
breaking through the low hanging clouds. But, we
hear him exclaim, as he drives out of sight ...

SCOTT
... Merry Christmas to all, and
to all a good night!

DISSOLVE TO:

ESTABLISHING SHOT

EXT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP, THE NORTH POLE - MORNING

The sleigh is seen coming in for a landing. AN ELF
stands by a large hangar and he guides the reindeer
in as they land.

INT. THE HANGAR - MORNING

A LARGE GROUP OF ELVES helps with the sleigh and the
reindeer. Some groom the reindeer. Others begin to
clean and polish the sleigh. They all pay no
attention to Scott. Scott gets out and goes up to
one of the elves.

SCOTT
'Scuse me.

The Elf bows.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Who's in charge here?

ELF
You are.

SCOTT
No. I mean... you guys... who's
in charge?

ELF
You are.

SCOTT
Who's the head elf?!

ELF
You are.

Another Elf approaches. He's BERNARD and he's bit
taller than the first one.

BERNARD
Who's causing all the trouble
around here?

ELF
(pointing to Scott)
He is.

BERNARD
(to the Elf)
Come on now. Back to work.
We've only got a year to get
ready.

The Elf busies himself. Bernard turns to Scott.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Can I get you a drink, sir?

SCOTT
Who are you?

BERNARD
I'm Bernard.

SCOTT
You know me?

BERNARD
Of course I do.

SCOTT
Who am I?

BERNARD
Don't you know?

SCOTT
I know. I want to see if you
know. Who am I?!

BERNARD
You're the guy who killed Santa
Claus.

SCOTT
I didn't kill him! He fell.
(pause)
How'd you know?

BERNARD
It happens all the time. Can I
get you a drink?

SCOTT
Wait... are you telling me...

BERNARD
Can we walk while we talk.
We're kinda busy here. We've
only got a year to prepare.

Bernard begins to leave the hangar.

EXT. THE HANGAR - MORNING

Bernard exits the hangar with Scott close on his
heels.

SCOTT
Wait a second!

BERNARD
Follow me. You'll be wanting to
get out of those clothes.

SCOTT
I'll be wanting to go home!

BERNARD

You are home.

Bernard enters a building. It's Santa's Workshop.

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - MORNING

Hundreds of ELVES are busy making toys.

SCOTT

This is not my home.

BERNARD

It is now.

SCOTT

It is not!

BERNARD

Did you or did you not put on that suit?

SCOTT

Well... yeah, I did, but--

BERNARD

Then you're the new Santa Claus. Those are the rules.

SCOTT

They're not my rules.

Bernard stops dead in his tracks. Scott bumps into him. Bernard tugs on Scott's coat to pull him down to his level to look him square in the eye.

BERNARD

(sternly)

Try to understand this. Toys have to be delivered. I'm not gonna do it. It's not my job. I'm just an elf. It's Santa's job. But Santa's dead. You put on the suit! So you're Santa! Okay!

Bernard takes off. Scott stays where he is. Bernard stops and turns back to Scott.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Judy will take you to your room.
Get out of the suit. It needs
to be pressed. Then get some
sleep. We've got a lot of work
to do and only a year in which
to do it.

Bernard leaves through a back door. A FEMALE ELF,
JUDY, is suddenly standing next to Scott.

SCOTT
Judy?

JUDY
Santa?

SCOTT
Yeah... I guess.

JUDY
Follow me.

INT. SANTA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Judy enters followed by Scott.

JUDY
Can I get you anything?

SCOTT
I'm okay.

JUDY
You should get some sleep.
(pause)
Your pajamas are in the closet.
I'll be right back.

Judy leaves, shutting the door. Scott takes off the
Santa jacket and opens the closet. He takes out a
pair of pajamas and puts on the tops. He finishes
getting in them. They're a beautiful pair of red,
silk pajamas. There's a monogram on the breast
pocket: "SC". He leaves the beard on. There's a
KNOCK on the door.

SCOTT
It's open.

Judy enters with a tray.

JUDY
I brought you some cocoa. And a
donut, too. They're fresh.

SCOTT
Thanks.

JUDY
Anything else?

SCOTT
No. Thanks.

He sips the cocoa.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Mmm. This is good.

JUDY
Uh huh.

Judy turns to leave.

SCOTT
Judy?

JUDY
Yes?

SCOTT
That Bernard guy. Is he in
charge?

JUDY
Most of the time.

SCOTT
He told me that this is my home
now. I gotta get back to my
wife.

JUDY
Don't mind Bernard. He likes to
play it tough. He's a nice guy.

Judy begins to leave again.

SCOTT
Judy?

JUDY
Yes?

SCOTT
Nothing... thanks for the donut.

JUDY
You're welcome. Good morning,
sir. Welcome home.

She leaves. Scott takes a bite of the donut. It's obvious that it's delicious by the way he devours the rest of it. He gets into the bed and covers himself with the overstuffed quilt. As he closes his eyes WE:

FADE TO BLACK

FADE UP:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

There's a person in the bed. WE SEE an arm with a red silk sleeve hanging out of the quilt. There's a NOISE from somewhere. Scott, still in the monogrammed pajamas, shakes himself to consciousness. Lynn, his wife, comes into the room carrying a tray.

LYNN
I brought you some coffee.

SCOTT
Huh?

LYNN
Coffee.

SCOTT
Where's Judy?

LYNN
Judy! You wanna tell me about it.

SCOTT
'Bout what?

LYNN
For starters, who's Judy?

SCOTT
She's an... wait... where...

LYNN
I don't think I like you
dreaming about other women.

Scott jumps out of bed and runs out of the BEDROOM.

WE FOLLOW AS HE DARTS IN TO THE
LIVING ROOM

Scott stops sharply at the tree. He looks under it.

LYNN (CONT'D)
What's going on, Scott? You're
acting wierd.

Scott is in a bit of a panic. He looks up the chimney. He runs to the front door and opens it. He runs back into the LIVING ROOM. Finally, he notices the pajamas he's got on. He runs his finger across the monogram.

SCOTT
(shouting)
What do you make of these!

LYNN
I like 'em.

SCOTT
(louder)
Look at these initials!

LYNN
Are you alright? They're your initials. Scott Calvin. I had them put on when I bought them. You said you liked them.

SCOTT
(suspiciously)
When did I say that?

LYNN
Last night. Scott? What's wrong?

SCOTT
Didn't he fall--

Scott stands motionless and just stares at Lynn.

LYNN
Fall? Who fell? Is this part
of the dream. Did Judy fall?
Who's Judy?

Scott slumps into a chair.

SCOTT
Wow. What a dream. It was so
real.

LYNN
Judy?

SCOTT
Huh?

LYNN
Who is Judy!?

SCOTT
It wasn't about Judy. It was
about...

LYNN
What!

SCOTT
Nothing. It was a dream.

He looks at the pajamas.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
When did you give these to me
again?

LYNN
Last night, Scott. Remember?
You cleaned up a bit. You came
into the bedroom and woke me up.
You begged me to open a present.
I told you, like I tell you
every year, that you'll have to
wait until morning. Then you
begged some more so I let you
open one present. It was the
pajamas that you're now wearing.
I told you to go to sleep or
Santa wouldn't come. Stop me
when any of this begins to sound
familiar.

SCOTT
He did come.

LYNN
Who?

SCOTT
Santa. He was here. He fell
off our roof and died.

LYNN
(sarcastically)
Then where did all those
presents come from?

SCOTT
In my dream. He died. You saw
the whole thing. Santa. He
fell off the roof. Judy brought
me a donut... and some cocoa.
Then I fell asleep.

LYNN
And this is the dream that's got
you so bent out of shape?

SCOTT
You were there. You saw the
whole thing.

LYNN
I didn't see anything.

SCOTT
You did to.

LYNN
I did not!

SCOTT
When did you buy these pajamas?

LYNN
'Bout a month ago. Why?

SCOTT
Where?

LYNN
What?

SCOTT
Where did you buy them?

LYNN
I got them at... at...

SCOTT
You don't remember!

LYNN
I--

SCOTT
You don't remember, 'cause you
didn't buy them. Judy gave them
to me.

LYNN
In your dream?

SCOTT
Maybe...

LYNN
Maybe what? Maybe it wasn't a
dream?

SCOTT
Then tell me where you bought
them. They're red silk pajamas.
They're monogrammed. You must
remember buying them.

Lynn stares off into space. She concentrates.

LYNN
(slowly)
I don't, Scott. I don't
remember...

INT. SCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

There are still Christmas decorations up but a wall calendar tells us that it's January 3. Scott enters. It looks as if he hasn't shaved since Christmas Eve. In fact, you could say that he has a beard. He takes off his coat and buzzes for his secretary. A WOMAN enters. She is a small woman. Almost elf-like. She looks a lot like Judy.

WOMAN
Yes?

Scott looks at her and stares.

SCOTT
Who are you?

JUDY
Judy. Your secretary.

SCOTT
No you're not. Where's Barbara?

JUDY
On vacation. I'm the temp.

SCOTT
I know you.

JUDY
I don't think so.

SCOTT
Ever been up north?

JUDY
Where?

SCOTT
Never mind.

JUDY
You want the morning mail?

SCOTT
Huh? Yeah. Leave it on the desk.

JUDY
Can I get you anything?

SCOTT
Coffee.

Judy leaves. Scott looks at his mail. There's only one large envelope. It's addressed to "SC". The postmark is from "The North Pole". Scott opens it.

XCU: THE COVER LETTER

"Please look over this list. Find out who's 'naughty' and who's 'nice'. Check it twice. Yours, Bernard."

BACK TO SCENE

SCOTT
(shouting)

Judy!

Judy enters with a cup.

JUDY
Sorry it took so long.

SCOTT
It wasn't a dream, was it?

Judy puts the cup on the desk. She sits on the chair across from Scott. Her feet don't reach the floor.

JUDY
No. It wasn't.

Scott takes a sip from the cup. He looks up.

JUDY (CONT'D)
Thought you might like some
cocoa instead.

SCOTT
It had to have been a dream.

JUDY
I'm telling you, Scott. It
wasn't a dream. It happened.
In your heart, you know that
it's real. Look, Scott. Look
into your heart. Tell me what
you see. Tell me what you feel.

Scott sits and stares off into space. There's an empty look on his face. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, his visage changes. The corners of his mouth twitch slightly then form a sly smile. And his eyes... the only way to describe it is to say that his eyes begin to twinkle. It's at that moment that Scott knows. He knows that it wasn't a dream.

SCOTT
So, what do I do now?

JUDY
Go over the list.

SCOTT
There's over a hundred pages.
There must be thousands of
names.

JUDY
Go through the list. Put a "P"
next to the names who were nice.
A "C" if they were naughty.

SCOTT
Huh?

JUDY
"P". For "Present". "C".
For--

SCOTT
"Coal".

JUDY
Right.

SCOTT
How do I know who's nice and
who's--

JUDY
Go through the list. You'll
know. Check it twice. I'll
need it by Friday.

INT. SCOTT AND LYNN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lynn is asleep. Scott is sitting up in bed. His beard is a bit heavier. Scott's bed table lamp is on. He's got the envelope from the North Pole. He takes out the papers and looks a page one.

XCU: PAGE ONE

There is a list of names. The first name is Aaron, Alan. Next to this name WE SEE Scott mark a "P". The next name is Aaron, Alex. Another "P". Next name is Aaron, Angela. "P". Aaron, Andy. Scott's hand pauses. Slowly, WE SEE him mark a "C".

BACK TO SCENE

Scott continues to go down the list. Lynn turns over.

LYNN
(groggy)
What time's it?

SCOTT
One o'clock.

LYNN
What are you doing?

SCOTT
Going over a list.

LYNN
Can't you do it tomorrow?

SCOTT
I need it by Friday.

LYNN
It's only Tuesday.

SCOTT
It's a long list. I gotta check
it twice.

Lynn sits up and looks at Scott's work.

LYNN
What is that?

SCOTT
I told you. It's a list.

LYNN
What does "C" mean?

SCOTT
"Coal".

LYNN
Scott. What are you doing?

SCOTT
Go to sleep. You wouldn't
believe me.

Pause. Scott puts down the list. He turns to face
Lynn.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Remember my dream?

LYNN

Judy.

SCOTT

The rest of the dream.

LYNN

Santa fell off the roof.

SCOTT

It wasn't a dream. It really happened.

LYNN

Why don't you go to sleep?

SCOTT

Lynn, listen to me. After I delivered all the presents the reindeer took me to the North Pole. That's where I first met Judy. This morning she gave me an envelope. The letter inside was signed, (beat) "Bernard".

LYNN

So?

SCOTT

I never mentioned Bernard to anybody. Did I ever mention Bernard to you? No. But the letter was signed, "Bernard".

LYNN

Who's Bernard?

SCOTT

I'm not sure. I think he's the head elf.

LYNN

You know, I mentioned this to Laura. She told Neal. He thinks that this is just your way of dealing with me not wanting kids right now.

SCOTT

Why do you have to tell her everything?

LYNN
She's my sister.

SCOTT
Well I don't like you parading
our private life all over town.

LYNN
Then answer me. How do you feel
about me now wanting to have a
kid?

Pause.

SCOTT
This is not about kids! It's
about Santa Claus!

Lynn gets out of bed. She's angry. Scott follows
her.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Lynn!

LYNN
I don't want to talk about it.

Scott catches up to Lynn.

SCOTT
Lynn. It really happened. I
know it did. When I went up on
the roof--

Scott stops talking and just stares.

LYNN
What?

SCOTT
Put on your coat.

EXT. THE ROOF

Scott and Lynn are bundled up against the night's
chill.

LYNN
This just might be the stupidest
thing we've ever done.

Scott is looking around.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Just what is it we're looking
for?

SCOTT
Just look.

They continue to search the area.

LYNN
Scott?

SCOTT
You find something?

LYNN
Did you check up here after the
roofers finished?

SCOTT
What?

LYNN
It's only been since last
spring... look at this.

Scott looks at the problem. There are two long
scratches running down the length of the roof.

SCOTT
Damnit! Those... No more. This
is the last time I use that
contractor--

Scott stops suddenly. He looks at the marks. He
follows them to the spot where they end. He follows
them to the other end. He looks at Lynn.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Come here.

LYNN
What?

SCOTT
(excited)
Look! The roofers didn't do
this. The sleigh did! They're
track marks! See. See where
they lead? Look! Look up
there!

Lynn goes to Scott. She looks to where he's pointing.

THEIR POV

From the edge of the roof, where the tracks end, a tree is visible. It's a large oak tree. Through the center of the tree is a large hole. A hole big enough to fit a sleigh through.

BACK TO SCENE

SCOTT (CONT'D)
The sleigh was parked over there. We took off. I had trouble handling it. We went right through that tree. Right through it!

He goes to the other end of the roof.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Look! Here.

Lynn approaches. Scott picks something up that is hanging from the gutter. He shows it to Lynn. It's a piece of fur.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
What do you make of this?

LYNN
That? Could be from a squirrel.

Scott opens his hand to reveal the whole piece. It's much too large to be from a squirrel. He shakes the fur. It JINGLES. There is a bell attached to it.

VOICE (OVER)
You rang?

Startled, they both look in the direction of the voice. Standing next to the chimney is Bernard.

BERNARD
Hi. You must be Scott's wife.

Instead of answering, Lynn faints.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lynn is lying on the couch. She's out cold. She has a cold rag on her head. Scott is at her side, patting her hand.

SCOTT
Lynn? Lynn? Can you hear me?

She starts to come out of it.

LYNN
(mumbling)
Scooo...

Here eyes flutter open. She looks up and sees Scott. She tries to get up.

SCOTT
No. Lay there. Relax.

LYNN
Ohhh. What... I had a dream...

Bernard enters with a glass of wine.

BERNARD
Here, give her a sip of this.

Lynn looks at Bernard. Instead of sipping the wine, she faints.

SCOTT
Maybe you'd better let me
explain things next time. You
wait in the kitchen.

Bernard exits. Scott carefully holds the wine up to her lips. The taste of it causes Lynn to wake up again.

LYNN
Mmmmm...

SCOTT
Lynn. It's me.

Lynn sits up.

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Easy now.

(He gives her
more wine.)

That's it.

LYNN

Scott...?

SCOTT

Listen to me. It wasn't a
dream. This is really
happening. I'm gonna call
Bernard out here. Think you can
handle it?

LYNN

What's going on?

SCOTT

(calling out)

Bernard? Can you hear me?

BERNARD (OVER)

Yeah.

SCOTT

See? He's in the kitchen. You
want to meet him now?

LYNN

I'm scared.

SCOTT

I know. I was too. It takes
some getting used to. Let me
call him out here. He's really
a nice guy. Ok?

LYNN

Yeah. I guess so.

SCOTT

(calling out)

You can come out now, Bernard.

Bernard peeks his head out from the KITCHEN.

BERNARD

She gonna be ok?

SCOTT

Yeah. Come on over.

Bernard cautiously approaches the couch. Lynn sits up. She stares at Bernard.

BERNARD

Hi.

LYNN

Hi.

BERNARD

I didn't mean to scare you like that.

LYNN

It's ok.

They all stand around looking at each other.

BERNARD

So!

SCOTT

What are you doing here, anyway, Bernard?

BERNARD

Yeah. Look, we need you up at the Pole.

SCOTT

Can Lynn come too?

BERNARD

Sure! The more the merrier.

SCOTT

Lynn?

LYNN

I don't know, Scott.

BERNARD

Hey, come on up. If you don't like it...

LYNN

What? If I don't like it, what?

BERNARD

I don't know.

LYNN

I can come back here. Can't I?

BERNARD

Well... not exactly.

SCOTT

What do you mean?

BERNARD

Look. She's either a part of this or she isn't. We're not running a hotel up there.

SCOTT

I'm not going without her.

BERNARD

Maybe you two should talk. I'll be back tomorrow. Meet me at the park.

CLOSE ON SCOTT AND LYNN

SCOTT

I really won't go without you.

LYNN

This is happening too fast.

SCOTT

Bernard, I--

PULL BACK TO REVEAL that Bernard is gone. Scott and Lynn look around to see where he could have gone to. He's nowhere to be seen.

INT. LAURA AND NEAL MILLER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lynn, Laura and Neal are having a talk.

LYNN

I just want you to know that I might be gone for awhile.

LAURA

Why can't you tell us where you're going?

LYNN

I... I can't.

NEAL

Lynn. I can see that you're upset. Talk to us. Tell us what's wrong.

LYNN

Nothing's wrong. Scott doesn't think I should--

LAURA

Scott! He put you up to this. You tell me what's happening and you tell me right now!

NEAL

Honey, don't pressure her.

LAURA

Don't "Honey" me. Scott's a fool. We all know that.

LYNN

He's not! He's... he's not a fool. If he wants me to be with him... I'll go. It's not foolish!

NEAL

Where? Go where? Why can't you tell us?

LYNN

You wouldn't understand. You wouldn't believe me.

LAURA

Is this about having kids? Are you going off somewhere--

LYNN

It's not that. Scott needs... some time to... think.

NEAL

Lynn. I may be way off base... but does this have anything to do with that Santa Claus business?

Lynn clams up. She looks away.

LAURA

It does! He's crazy, Sis.
Don't let him take you anywhere.

LYNN

He's my husband. I love him.

LAURA

Right! And you'd follow him to
the ends of the earth. Where's
he taking you... the North
Pole?!

Lynn gets up to leave.

LYNN

I have to go now. I just wanted
to tell you that I'll be gone
for--

NEAL

Lynn, wait! Talk to me.

LYNN

I... I'll see you later.

Lynn exits in a hurry, leaving the front door open.
Neal and Laura call out after her but to no avail.
They close the door.

LAURA

I'm worried about her.

NEAL

With good reason.

LAURA

What do you think is going on
with them?

NEAL

I think that Scott is having a
nervous breakdown. Lynn is
denying it. That's not good.
She's getting too involved in
his delusions. I don't like
this.

LAURA

Why? What do you think he'll do?

NEAL

I don't know how far gone he is... but there's every indication that he truly believes that he's been chosen to be Santa Claus.

(thinking)

Now Lynn tells us that she'll be gone for awhile. She won't say where. She runs out of here at the mention of the North Pole.

LAURA

My god, Neal! You don't think...!

Neal looks at Laura and simply nods.

EXT. A PLAYGROUND - DAY

CLOSE ON Scott and Lynn who are sitting on a park bench. Scott still hasn't shaven and his beard is starting to look pretty good. It's the waning days of winter, so the park is empty.

SCOTT

You mean it?

LYNN

Yes.

SCOTT

That's it, then. We're going.

LYNN

I guess so. When?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL that Bernard is now sitting with them.

BERNARD

Whenever you're ready.

SCOTT

Oh. Hi.

BERNARD

Howdy.

(to Lynn)

Welcome aboard.

LYNN

Thanks.

BERNARD

Ready?

SCOTT

Now?

BERNARD

Now's as good a time as any.

LYNN

What about our--

BERNARD

Everything you'll need is
already there.

Scott looks at Lynn. He takes her hand.

SCOTT

You ready?

LYNN

(with a little
chuckle)

This is really wierd.

SCOTT

(smiling)

I know.

They stare at each other for a moment. Then they
gently kiss.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

(to Bernard)

What are you waiting for? Let's
go!

And then... They're gone!

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

EXT. THE NORTH POLE - DAY

The sun is glistening off the snow. As WE get closer to the ground WE SEE SANTA'S WORKSHOP.

EXT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - DAY

In an instant ... Bernard, Scott and Lynn are there. Bernard is dressed as he was. Lynn is now wearing a large furry overcoat to protect her from the cold. And Scott ... Scott is dressed as Santa Claus. With his new beard and white hair he looks ... quite the part.

BERNARD

Well! Welcome home.

SCOTT

(Looking at his
outfit)

Wow. This feels great! This is
it, hon. The North Pole. How
do you like it?

Lynn tries to take it all in. A GROUP OF ELVES
walks by. They greet Bernard and are cordial to
Lynn. They refer to Scott as "Boss". Judy is
among the group of elves. She stops.

JUDY

Hi.

SCOTT

Honey, this is--

LYNN

Don't tell me. Judy?

JUDY

Hi.

LYNN

My husband told me about you. I
hear you make a helluva good cup
of cocoa.

JUDY

Come on. I'll show you around.

EXT. SANTA'S MAIN WORKSHOP - DAY

JUDY

Brace yourself. This might take
some getting used to.

INT. SANTA'S MAIN WORKSHOP - DAY

Judy and Lynn enter. The place is a beehive of activity. While the look is that of a busy factory THE SOUND is all JINGLE BELLS, SINGING AND MERRIMENT. As Lynn walks through she is greeted with choruses of: "Howdy do, Mrs. C!", " Nice to have you home, Ma'am.", "Beautiful day!", etc. Lynn looks at Judy and smiles.

JUDY

How do you feel?

LYNN

It's... it feels like home.
It's wonderful.

JUDY

There. That didn't take too
long.

INT. NEAL MILLER'S OFFICE - DAY

Neal is at his desk filling out some forms. Laura is sitting across from him.

LAURA

Are we doing the right thing?

NEAL

You're her closest living
relative. You have the right to
protect her. If he was beating
her you'd intervene.

LAURA

But he's not--

NEAL

The point is, he's causing her
harm. Psychological harm. If
having them committed is the
only way to stop them... then,
yes. We're doing the right
thing.

He offers her the papers. She signs where he indicates.

LAURA

Now what?

NEAL

We present these to a judge. If he agrees...

Laura bows her head. She begins to cry.

NEAL (CONT'D)

They'll be well taken care of. The Urbisci Institute is the best there is. Believe me, this is the only way.

The intercom BUZZES.

NEAL (CONT'D)

(into intercom)

I told you I didn't want to be interrupted--

INTERCOM VOICE (OVER)

I know, Doctor. But... there's a... man to see you. He says it's urgent.

NEAL

Tell him to wait. I'm--

INTERCOM VOICE (OVER)

He says you'd want to see him--

BERNARD (OVER)

(from intercom)

It's family business. It's about Scott and Lynn.

NEAL

Send him in.

Bernard enters. He's not wearing his "elf" outfit. He's dressed in a business suit. Neal and Laura try not to react to his size.

NEAL (CONT'D)

Come in Mr...?

BERNARD

Bernard. Call me "Bernard".

NEAL

Bernard. What do you know about Scott and Lynn?

BERNARD

They're fine.

LAURA

What have you done with them, you little--

NEAL

Laura! Please. Let's hear what Bernard has to say.

BERNARD

Thanks, Doc. They're fine. That's it. See ya'.

He begins to leave.

NEAL

Wait!

Bernard stops and turns.

BERNARD

Yeah?

NEAL

Let's talk.

BERNARD

I'm not paying you.

NEAL

It's on the house.

BERNARD

Fire away, it's your nickel.

Bernard sits on the chair next to Laura. He smiles at her.

LAURA

Who are you?

BERNARD

I told you. I'm Bernard.

NEAL
Where you from?

BERNARD
Up north.

NEAL
North?

BERNARD
Yeah, north.

NEAL
What do you do?

BERNARD
Huh?

NEAL
For a living?

BERNARD
I help out.

NEAL
Help out?

BERNARD
Yeah. I'm a helper.

NEAL
You wouldn't perhaps be... one
of Santa's helpers, would you?

Bernard approaches the desk and stares at Neal.

BERNARD
I suggest you not get mixed up
in this.

NEAL
Do you realize how sick a man
Scott is?

BERNARD
He's not sick. And I'd stop
with this committment business
if I were you.

NEAL
How do you know about--

BERNARD

I have my ways. Now, why don't you just forget about Scott and Lynn. They'll be alright. Don't cause trouble... or else!

NEAL

Or else, what?

BERNARD

You don't want to mess with me.

NEAL

Why not?

BERNARD

Because deep down you know who I am. And if you know who I am, you must know what I'm capable of.

NEAL

Are you threatening me, Bernard?

BERNARD

Let's just call it, "elfish advice".

NEAL

And what are to be the consequences if I don't heed this... advice?

BERNARD

You don't want to know.

NEAL

Try me.

Bernard gets off the chair and climbs up on the doctor's desk. He crawls across the desk and faces the doctor, eye to eye. Bernard scowls. He reaches into his pocket and takes something out. Slowly, deliberately he holds out his closed hand.

CLOSE ON BERNARD'S HAND

As he opens his hand what's inside is revealed. There, cradled in the palm of Bernard's small hand, is a lump of coal.

BACK TO SCENE

Neal stares at the lump of coal. Laura stands up to see what it is. She too, stares at it. Bernard just laughs.

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Bernard is supervising the rest of the elves. Scott enters.

SCOTT

Bernard? I gotta talk to you.

BERNARD

Shoot.

SCOTT

I was talking to Lynn... and she... that is we...

BERNARD

I understand.

SCOTT

What?

BERNARD

You're scared.

SCOTT

Well... yeah. What's to stop... me from falling off a roof next year?

BERNARD

Scott. There are no guarantees. We do the best we can.

SCOTT

Well what are my chances? How often do you go through this?

BERNARD

Oh... every... so often.

SCOTT

How many Santas have there been?

BERNARD

Follow me.

Scott follows Bernard to a corner of the room where one wall is lined with about a hundred photos of Santa Claus. Bernard points to the wall of pictures.

SCOTT'S POV

He scans the photos. Each Santa is a different man. Some are even women.

BACK TO SCENE

SCOTT
There have been this many?!

BERNARD
These are just the ones since
nineteen hundred.

SCOTT
(shocked)
Nineteen hundred! That's not
even one a year. What you're
telling me is that I'm sure to
buy it.

BERNARD
Pretty much... well, yeah.

SCOTT
That's it then! Lynn was right.
I gotta protect myself.

BERNARD
And how do you propose to do
that?

SCOTT
I don't know. Ropes. Some kind
of harness connected to the
sleigh.

BERNARD
That'll protect you from falls.
But what're you gonna do about
getting shot?

SCOTT
Shot?!

BERNARD

It happens sometimes. An overprotective homeowner...

SCOTT

I'll... I'll wear a bullet proof vest.

BERNARD

No can do. We've tried that before. You wouldn't be able to get down the chimney. Besides, a vest wouldn't protect you from the planes.

SCOTT

Planes?!

BERNARD

Look, try as we might, we can't control the reindeer. Occasionally they veer off course and stray into restricted air space.

SCOTT

Bernard! Come on. Throw me a bone. I really want to do this. I think I'll make a good Santa.

Pause.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Alright. This then. I'll tie a rope to the sleigh and I'll carry a gun.

Bernard gives Scott a look.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Just to protect myself.

BERNARD

And if someone sees you...?

SCOTT

Well... I'll shoot them. I'll be careful... I'll aim for the leg or something. Just to slow them down.

BERNARD

I don't know. I don't think I can have Santa going around shooting people. It wouldn't look good. Santa shooting back? No. I can't let you do that.

SCOTT

Give me some kind of protection, then. Something. Listen, Bernard. You go through a new Santa every year. Wouldn't it be easier if you didn't have to?

Bernard gives this some thought.

BERNARD

(almost to himself)

Mmm. A permanant Santa.

SCOTT

Yeah! A permanant Santa! That's it.

BERNARD

You know, it just might work.

SCOTT

Sure! It'd be great!

BERNARD

I can't let you carry a gun. I'll turn it over to the research department. Let me see what the elves come up with.

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Bernard and Judy are leading Scott and Lynn who are both blindfolded.

SCOTT

When can we look?

LYNN

I'm so excited.

BERNARD

Keep your shorts on. We're almost there.

They come to a side door in the WORKSHOP. They open the door and enter.

INT. THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Now!

Scott and Lynn take off the blindfolds. They look around, amazed.

THEIR POV

Santa's Sleigh is in the center of the large cavernous room. A series of pulleys and hoists are surrounding it. Around the perimeter of the room are many alcoves where ELVES are working on elaborate projects. It's easy to picture if you think of James Bond's Q Branch. Bernard is M, Scott is 007 and the ELVES are the best that British Intelligence has to offer.

BACK TO SCENE

SCOTT

Wow!

BERNARD

I gotta hand it to them. They outdid themselves. This is some of the best work that's come out of the workshop since Nintendo.

SCOTT

What is it all?

BERNARD

It's what you asked for. You want to be the permanent Santa... you got it!

QUINTIN, AN ELF, approaches them. He wipes his hands on a rag and extends it to Scott.

QUINTIN

Howdy do, Santa. Have I got a sleigh for you. Follow me.

The rest of this scene, FOLLOW as Quintin takes them on the tour.

(MORE)

QUINTIN (CONT'D)
You gave us quite a problem.
It's not in our nature to hurt
people. In fact, it's contrary
to our very being. So most of
what we've done is defensive.
Here.

Quintin puts a new hat on Scott.

QUINTIN
Ok, now listen carefully... tell
me what you hear.

SCOTT
Sounds like your inside my head.
How'd you...

QUINTIN
Your hat is lined with the radio
reciever. Everything I say will
sound like that. I'll put your
transmitter in your beard. You
just talk, I'll hear you. Look
at this.

They come to the sleigh. Quintin JINGLES THE BELLS.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)
Sounds the same. But we've
added an extra frequency that
will jam most modern radar.
We're usually detected on the
trans-oceanic portion of the
flight. The reindeer like to be
above the current. These bells
will render you virtually
invisible.

Quintin lifts up the seat.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)
This device will emit a signal
that's exactly the same as a
Boeing 767. In the event that
the bells don't work and you are
detected, they'll think you're
commercial airline and that
there's something wrong with
your radio. They won't shoot
you down as a UFO first and ask
questions later.

SCOTT
That's happened?

QUINTIN
'Couple of times. This is a special frequency raido. Nobody will be able to tap into it. We'll monitor the entire flight from Command Central. You'll be in constant contact with me except for the last two minutes of the flight.

SCOTT
Why's that?

QUINTIN
The trajectory back to the Workshop takes you directly over the Magnetic Pole. We'll lose radio contact. We've plotted the course to allow for minimum down time. A two minute black out is the best we could do. Come here, look at this.

He moves to the back of the sleigh and points to three pipes under the carriage.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)
Smoke screen. We've rigged it so that it actually draws in residue from the atmosphere. If you don't use it, you'll actually be cleaning up the air a bit.

LYNN
What if he does use it?

QUINTIN
That's the beauty. The air will be no dirtier than before. We call her ESSE, Environmentally Safe Smoke Emmiter.

SCOTT
How do I turn it on?

QUINTIN
Here.

They move to the front. Quintin flips a panel door.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)
The control panel.

CU

On the panel. Buttons are marked, "ESSE", "Shield", "767" and a large red button labled, "PET".

BERNARD
What's "PET"?

QUINTIN
Passenger Ejection Throttle.

SCOTT
You're kidding.

INT. LAURA AND NEAL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

LAURA
What if they don't come? How
can you be sure?

NEAL
Laura, it's my job. I know how
these delusions work. Bernard
gave it away. In their eyes,
we've been naughty. They must
punish us and they'll do it by
giving us a lump of coal for
Christmas.

LAURA
That's five months away! Where
are they now?

NEAL
It's my guess that they're up
north. As close to the North
Pole as they could get.

LAURA
I'm scared for Lynn.

NEAL
I think she'll be alright.
Understand, he thinks he's Santa
Claus. He's probably more
gentle with her now than he's
ever been.

INT. SANTA RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER - NIGHT

TWO ELVES fire up some flame throwers and fire at a full size mannequin dressed in a Santa suit. It's a raging inferno, but the suit remains in tact.

QUINTIN

Your new suit. The piece de resistance. For the first time it's completely flame retardant. You can't fall off the roof 'cause it's connected to the sleigh magnetically. It's like having a thick rope between you and the sleigh, but there's nothing there to get tangled up in. And it will stop a bullet up to .38 caliber.

AN ELF unloads a round into the suit. Not a mark on it.

BERNARD

Quintin? That's incredible. How'd you--

QUITIN

Judy came up with it. It's a brand new fabric... lightweight, durable yet flexible enough to allow for full descension and ascension.

LYNN

I hate to criticize, but what if the bullet is bigger than a .38?

QUITIN

We're working on it.

Scott goes to the suit. He reaches out to touch it. He feels one of the pom poms.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)

Careful! Don't touch anything until I tell you it's ok.

SCOTT

Why? What are these?

QUITIN

I'll show you.

Quintin pulls off one of the pom poms and looks at a GROUP OF ELVES working across the way. He lobbs the pom pom in their direction. Upon landing, it explodes silently making a deep fog. When the fog lifts, the Elves are all laying on the ground.

LYNN

My god, are they...

QUITIN

Don't worry. They'll wake up in about five minutes. They'll feel great. They won't remember a thing. Use these in the event that someone sees you.

They cross to a large table. There is a miniature neighborhood set up. On one of the roofs is a model of the newly equipped sleigh.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)

Here's something we're still working on. We're trying to give the reindeer less of a load. The new sleigh weighs a lot more than the unprotected model. We figure if they can acheive vertical take-off and landing it'll save a lot of wear and tear. Look.

Quintin nods to AN ELF at the table. The elf throws a switch and puts on a pair of goggles.

ELF

Here. You better wear these.

He hands out goggles to the spectators. They don them. Slowly the mini-sleigh begins to rise straight up.

QUITIN

The reindeer won't have to do a gallop take-off and horizontal landing each time.

As it rises, it begins to shake.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)

This will allow them to save their strength for the actual flying.

The model shakes some more and begins to lose altitude. As it starts to descend, it explodes. All that is left in the model neighborhood is a miniature mushroom cloud.

ELF

We should have the bugs out by
Christmas Eve.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SANTA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lynn is helping THE ELVES prepare a large meal. She is dressed in a pleasant looking dress. She's a bit frumpier than we're used to seeing, but she looks happy. She reminds one of MRS. CLAUS, so that's what we'll call her from now on. Scott enters. He's wearing Santa's suit. His beard is long and white, as is his hair. He is SANTA CLAUS so that's what we'll call him from now on. Santa Claus comes up behind Mrs. Claus as she lifts the turkey platter. He gives her a hug.

SANTA

I love you.

MRS. CLAUS

Make some coffee.

SANTA

Regular or decaf?

MRS. CLAUS

I love you, too.

Santa and Mrs. Claus kiss.

SANTA

Happy Thanksgiving.

MRS. CLAUS

Decaf.

She carries the turkey platter into the DINING ROOM.

INT. DINING ROOM

There are five long tables with DOZENS AND DOZENS OF ELVES at each one. Each table is set for a feast. Three large turkeys sit on each table.

(MORE)

Mrs. Claus enters and sets the turkey down. Santa enters close behind. He sits down at what is the head table. Mrs. Claus is on his right, Bernard on his left. Santa clinks a wine glass with a spoon to get the Elves attention.

SANTA

I'd like to say a few words
before we eat.

A HUSH falls over the crowd.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Thanks. Ahem. I just want to say that the past few months have meant a lot to Mrs. Claus and myself. You've made us feel right at home and I can't tell you how good that makes us feel.

APPLAUSE.

SANTA (CONT'D)

We have twenty-six days until Christmas Eve. I really appreciate the work that you've done. I'll be out there... but I won't be alone. For the first time, in a long time, Santa will return safely, you can count on that!

APPLAUSE.

SANTA (CONT'D)

I know you've all done your best. That's all I ever expected. Let the word go out from this day on that a new generation is upon us. A generation born in this century. My safe return will mark a milestone. No more will you have to deal with a new Santa every year. From now on, you've got your Santa Claus. And I hope and pray that I'll be here... FOREVER!

WILD APPLAUSE.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Now let's eat!

A great feast commences.

BERNARD
Hell of a speech.

SANTA
I meant every word. I love
being here.

BERNARD
Look... I... I want you to
know...

SANTA
Bernard. You don't have to say
it. I know that nothing's
fool-proof. You've given it
your best shot. I'll be ok.

BERNARD
I sure as hell hope so.

INT. NEAL AND LAURA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (CHRISTMAS
EVE)

The Christmas tree is fully lit as is the fire
place. Neal and Laura are having a drink.

NEAL
You understand what you have to
do?

LAURA
Yes.

NEAL
Any problems?

LAURA
This isn't how I'd choose to
spend Christmas Eve.

NEAL
We have to do it tonight. It's
our only chance.

LAURA
I know. How can you be sure...

NEAL

He'll be here. He has to.
Don't you see, it's part of the
delusion.

Laura pokes at the fire.

NEAL (CONT'D)

Don't do that. I want the fire
to go out.

LAURA

Why?

NEAL

I'm pretty sure that Scott will
try to use the fireplace. He
must complete the scenario.

LAURA

He'll try to come down the
chimney?

NEAL

Anything's possible at this
point. Our job is to detain him
long enough to convince him to
give himself up. We've got to
get him to admit that he's not
Santa Claus. Whatever it
takes, he must not leave once he
gets here.

EXT. SANTA'S HANGAR - NIGHT

It's desolate. The snow is being blown about. The
night sky is clear and ablaze with starlight. In
the distance three figures approach. As they get
closer WE SEE that they are Santa, Mrs. Claus and
Bernard. They stop in front of the large hangar
door. A nervous SILENCE surrounds them.

BERNARD

How do you feel?

SANTA

Good. I feel good. Everything
ready?

BERNARD
Quintin's finishing up.
Everything's a go. We're right
on time.

SANTA
Yeah. Good... I feel good...

MRS. CLAUS
Are you alright?

SANTA
I'm a little nervous. It's a
good nervous, though.

MRS. CLAUS
I love you.

SANTA
I know. That helps.

They embrace. Bernard looks on. It's a peaceful,
less nervous moment. Suddenly, there's the sound of
a LOUD ALARM. A yellow light comes on and the door
to the hangar slowly begins to open. As it does,
the intense colorful lights from inside begin to
pour out. Bernard, Santa and Mrs. Claus step back
out of the way.

THEIR POV

The door is now open. Inside, WE SEE the reindeer
and sleigh. HUNDREDS OF ELVES are there. It's a
swarm of activity. Quintin sits in the sleigh and
gently pulls on the reins. The reindeer slowly move
outside. The sleigh looks sleeker than it did last
year. It comes to a stop.

BACK TO SCENE

Santa goes up to the reindeer.

SANTA
How you doing, Comet?

He rubs Comet's nose. Comet snuggles up to Santa.
Santa reaches into his pocket and gives Comet a
sugar cube. He goes and pets the rest of the eight.

SANTA (CONT'D)
How you guys doing?

The reindeer are happy to see their boss. Santa moves to the sleigh. He helps Quintin down.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Looks good, Quintin.

QUINTIN
Thanks.

Santa gets up in the sleigh.

(MORE)
QUINTIN (CONT'D)
Hold 'em back the first hour or so. They need to get used to the heavier load.

SANTA
Check.

QUINTIN
I've set the radio frequency. If you need to change it...

SANTA
We've been through it all, Quintin. You've taught me well, old friend. I know what to do.

QUINTIN
You'll be just fine.

SANTA
With you on my team, how can I lose?

QUINTIN
Whenever you're ready.

Santa takes a hold of the reins. The reindeer are ready to go.

SANTA
Easy, boys. Now Dasher. Now Dancer. Now Prancer and Vixen.

QUINTIN
See you in the morning.

SANTA
(to Quintin) You can count on that. (beat) On Comet! On Cupid! On Donner and Blitzen!

The sleigh slowly begins to move out.

SANTA (CONT'D)
(Waving) I love you.

BERNARD
I love you, too.

SANTA
I was talking to her.

Mrs. Claus laughs. So does Bernard. And Santa? He lets out a hardy "HO! HO! HO!" as the sleigh takes off into the brilliant night sky.

QUINTIN
Alright, everybody. It's gonna be a long night. To your posts.

The elves scatter. Bernard and Quintin walk off with Mrs. Claus.

EXT. SANTA'S SLEIGH - NIGHT

Santa, in his sleigh, is flying smoothly along.

QUINTIN (OVER)
Testing... testing... do you read me?

SANTA
Ho, ho! Loud and clear, Quintin. Wow, you scared me. I thought you were in the sleigh for a minute. The sound's great!

QUINTIN (OVER)
You're looking good from here...

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Quintin is at Control Central. A large screen tracks the progress of the trip.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)
... You might want to ease up a bit on the altitude. Bring 'em up slower.

SANTA (OVER)
Roger. I tell you, though, they
want to fly.

QUINTIN
Sure, now. But you got a whole
evening ahead of you. I just
want to make sure they have
enough juice to get you back.

INTERCUT:

THE SLEIGH

SANTA
Hey, we'll be back, don't you
worry about--

The sleigh bounces about.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Whoa!

QUINTIN (OVER)
(concerned) What was that?

SANTA
I don't know... we hit an air
pocket or something. Gave us
quite a jolt. Everything's
alright.

WORKSHOP

An Elf approaches Quintin.

ELF
I'm getting a weird reading on
the tracking. That last bump
might have shaken something
loose.

QUINTIN
What? What kind of reading?

ELF
I don't know. It's like a
double image. Like there's two
sleighs out there.

QUINTIN
No. That's the radar jamming device. Something's picking him up. (into microphone) Santa, do you read me?

SANTA (OVER)
What's up, Quintin?

QUINTIN
You're being tracked.

THE SLEIGH

QUINTIN (OVER)
The jamming device is causing a double image. It's not blacking you out. Use the bells more.

Santa jingles the bells.

INT. AIRPORT CONTROL TOWER - NIGHT

CONTROLLER
Will the unidentified 767 please respond... Unidentified 767 please respond... Head left seven-niner... Please respond.

The controller waits and is answered by static.

INT. WORKSHOP

QUINTIN
Keep it up. You'll be out of their jurisdiction soon. It's working fine. Turn left heading seven-niner.

INT. CONTROL TOWER

CONTROLLER
Unidentified 767 we have no radio contact... keep on current heading... (to another controller) They apparently hear us but can't talk. Mark them as unresponsive, they'll be out of our sector soon.

THE SLEIGH

Santa is still frantically jingling the bells.

SANTA
Ho, ho ho! Way to go, Quintin.

QUINTIN (OVER)
Alright, you're clear. Ease up
on the bells and continue on as
scheduled. You'll be making
your first stop soon.

The sleigh continues on its flight.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A COUPLE lays asleep in bed. A NOISE is heard. THE
HUSBAND wakes with a start.

HUSBAND
Whaa...?

THE WIFE wakes up.

WIFE
What is it?

HUSBAND
I heard something.

THE NOISE again.

HUSBAND (CONT'D)
There! What is that?

WIFE
Someone's in the living room.

The husband gets out of bed.

WIFE (CONT'D)
I'm calling the police.

HUSBAND
Wait!

He goes to the closet and gets out a golf bag. He
chooses a club, pauses for a beat and then chooses a
different club.

HUSBAND (CONT'D)
I'll handle this. You make sure
the kids are alright.

He sneaks out of the room, the club poised for an
attack.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Santa is by the tree putting out the last of the
gifts. He stops and takes a drink of milk that was
left for him. He hears A NOISE and freezes. He
slowly moves to hide behind the tree. The husband
sneaks into the room. He turns on the light. Santa
comes out from behind the tree.

SANTA
Hi.

HUSBAND
Who are you?

SANTA
I'm Santa Claus. You can put
down the golf club, I won't hurt
you.

HUSBAND
What are you doing here?

SANTA
I'm leaving some gifts for Pete
and Julie.

HUSBAND
How do you know my kids?

SANTA
They wrote me. Here.

Santa hands him a present.

HUSBAND
What's this?

SANTA
They wanted me to bring you a
tie. It's red. I hope you like
it.

The wife, PETE AND JULIE come into the living room.

WIFE

Harold?

HUSBAND

It's ok. Stay outta here.

PETE

It's Santa!

Pete starts to run to Santa, but Harold stops him.

HUSBAND

You stay with me, Pete.

PETE

Santa? Did you bring me...

SANTA

... The dump truck? You betcha.

PETE

Yay!

SANTA

Hi, Julie.

Julie is younger than Pete and is shy.

SANTA (CONT'D)

It was nice meeting you folks.
I gotta be going now.

PETE

Did you have some milk, Santa?

SANTA

Oh, Indeed I did, Pete. I love
milk. Mind if I take one of
these apples?

PETE

Sure! They're for the reindeer.

SANTA

Great. Comet loves apples.

HUSBAND

(suspiciously) Who are you?

SANTA

You know who I am.

Santa pulls a pom pom off of his suit.

SANTA (CONT'D)
You folks have a Merry, Merry
Christmas. Ho, ho, ho!

He lobs the pom pom in their direction. There's a puff a smoke. When the smoke clears the family is peacefully asleep on the floor. Santa is gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE SLEIGH - NIGHT

Santa is merrily sailing along. He hears a voice, that isn't Quintin's.

VOICE (OVER)
Hi, Santa.

Santa looks to his right and sees a boy sitting there.

SANTA
Well, hello. Who are you?

BOY
I'm Ryan.

SANTA
Ryan Bailey?

RYAN
Yup.

SANTA
How long you been here, Ryan?

RYAN
'Couple of stops.

SANTA
You shouldn't be here.

RYAN
Why?

SANTA
Well, I've got a lot of work to do. I can't be looking after a little boy.

RYAN
I'm not little. I'm five-and-a-half.

QUINTIN (OVER)
Come on, Santa. Get rid of him, we're falling behind schedule.

SANTA
Roger.

RYAN
No. It's Ryan.

SANTA
Ho, ho! How'd you like to go for a parachute ride, Ryan?

RYAN
Really!

SANTA
Hold on.

Santa pushes the "PET" button on the control panel.
Ryan gets strapped in and is ejected.

RYAN
Wheeeeeeeee...!

And then... Ryan is gone.

QUINTIN (OVER)
We'll contact his parents when he lands. The little guy'll be ok.

SANTA
He's not little. He's five-and-a-half! Ho, ho, ho!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANOTHER LIVING ROOM

Santa is again by the tree finishing up when the lights come on suddenly. Santa looks up with a start. A MAN, holding a gun is there.

SANTA
Hi.

MAN
Who the hell are you?

SANTA
I'm Santa--

MAN
Shut up! Away from the tree.
Slowly! Put your hands up.

Santa complies.

MAN (CONT'D)
What's in the bag?

SANTA
Presents.

MAN
What are you doing here?

SANTA
Why don't you put that gun down?

MAN
Why don't you just answer me.

SANTA
Your niece wrote me. I'm just
leaving you a gift.

MAN
What niece?

SANTA
Lisa.

Santa lowers his hand and reaches for a pom pom.

MAN
Stay put!

SANTA
I was gonna show you her letter.

MAN
I don't want to see any letter.
Do you know what this is?

The man brandishes about the gun.

SANTA

It's a gun.

MAN

You're wrong. It's a .44
Magnum. It's the most powerful
hand weapon there is.

SANTA

I'm impressed. You gonna shoot
me?

MAN

It's three o'clock in the
morning. You're dressed up like
Santa Claus and you're sneaking
around my living room carrying a
large bag. You're damn right
I'll shoot you. I'm defending
my property.

SANTA

You don't have to. I was just
leaving.

MAN

The only place you're going is
to jail.

The man carefully reaches for the phone, still
pointing the gun at Santa.

MAN (CONT'D)

Now, you stay as still as a
mouse and there'll be no
problem.

The man looks at the phone for an instant. Santa
makes another move for a pom pom. The man looks up
and sees that Santa is moving.

MAN (CONT'D)

(terrified)

Don't!

The man fires the gun. It makes a LOUD NOISE. In a
flash Santa moves his hand to cover his heart. The
man and Santa both freeze. Santa puts out his hand
and slowly opens it. Inside, is a .44 bullet. The
man looks at it, stunned. Santa reaches for a pom
pom with his other hand and lobs it. In the insuing
fog, Santa leaves.

EXT. THE ROOF

Santa gets in the sleigh.

QUINTIN (OVER)
You ok?

SANTA
That .44 scared me for a minute.
Tell Judy that the lead lined
gloves work great. I'm outta
here.

The sleigh does an effortless vertical take-off and
then the reindeer take over. They fly off.

QUINTIN (OVER)
That's a wrap, boss. Bring it
on home.

INT. NEAL AND LAURA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's dark. A shadow is seen near the tree. The
lights come on. Santa looks up. Neal comes out of
hiding.

SANTA
Neal! You should be asleep.

Laura shows herself.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Laura. How've you been. It's
been a long time.

LAURA
You bastard! Where's Lynn?

SANTA
She's home. She's fine.

NEAL
Can we have a word with you?

SANTA
I'm running a little late.

NEAL
It'll just take a minute.

SANTA
Sure, why not? It's Christmas.

NEAL
Where is she, Scott?

SANTA
I haven't been called that for a long time.

NEAL
Where is she?

SANTA
She's up at the Workshop.

NEAL
Where's that?

SANTA
It's at the North Pole. Look, I really gotta be going.

Santa makes a move to leave.

LAURA
(urgently)
Wait!

SANTA
What?

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

QUINTIN
What the hell's going on?

ELF
He's down at the Miller's.

MRS. CLAUS
That's my sister.

QUINTIN
(in microphone) Get out of there, Santa. Get out of there now!

INTERCUT:

NEAL AND LAURA'S

SANTA
Roger. I'll be just a minute.

NEAL
Who you talking to?

SANTA
I really gotta be going.

QUINTIN (OVER)
Get out. Now!

SANTA
In a minute!

NEAL
Do you hear me, Scott? Are you
talking to someone?

SANTA
Someone wants me to get out of
here.

WORKSHOP

ELF
Quintin. He's been there too
long. The sleigh will be
visible soon.

QUINTIN
Damnit! We can't risk having
them spotted. Get them off that
roof until we can get Santa
outta there.

EXT. NEAL AND LAURA'S ROOF - NIGHT

The sleigh begins to slowly ascend. Then... it's
gone.

INT. NEAL AND LAURA'S

NEAL
We missed you at Thanksgiving,
Scott.

SANTA
Do you think you can see if you
can call me, Santa?

NEAL
I don't think so.

SANTA
Why not?

NEAL
I'd feel silly calling you
Santa.

SANTA
Silly? Why?

NEAL
Because, you're not Santa.
You're Scott Calvin.

Santa thinks about that name.

SANTA
Scott Calvin... I remember him.

LAURA
Him? He's not some other
person. You are Scott Calvin.

SANTA
No, I'm not.

NEAL
Well, who are you, then?

SANTA
I'm Santa Claus.

NEAL
Who?

SANTA
Santa Claus.

NEAL
Are you listening to yourself?

QUINTIN (OVER)
Santa? Get out of there, now!

NEAL
Do you realize--

SANTA
Hold on a minute... I need to
finish here.

NEAL

Is there someone else here with
us, Scott?

QUINTIN (OVER)

Stop talking to him. He's going
to confuse you.

SANTA

I... huh? Someone else? No.
I'm talking to...

QUINTIN (OVER)

Stop talking! Don't say
anymore!

Santa suddenly clams up.

NEAL

What is it, Scott?

SANTA

I... I gotta go.

NEAL

How'd you get here, Scott?

SANTA

What?

NEAL

Where you going? How you going
to get there?

WORKSHOP

ELF

Quintin? I'm having trouble
keep a lock on the sleigh.

QUINTIN

What? Why the hell--

There's a small electrical surge from the main
board. The lights dim for a minute then come up
real bright. Then they return to normal.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)

What the hell was that?!

ELF
Some kind of power surge. We...
we lost him.

QUINTIN
What?

ELF
Radio contact. We've lost
Santa.

NEAL AND LAURA'S

NEAL
Answer me, Scott. How you going
to get there?

Santa doesn't answer. He listens for some
instructions from Quintin.

SANTA
Hello?

NEAL
Scott?

SANTA
Come in... Quintin.

NEAL
Who's Quintin?

LAURA
Where's Lynn? What's wrong with
you?

SANTA
Quintin?

NEAL
There's no one else here, Scott.

Neal grabs the bag from Santa. He looks inside it.

NEAL (CONT'D)
Look here, Scott. Look in the
bag. What do you see.

Santa looks into the bag.

SANTA
It's empty.

NEAL

Why do you suppose you're
lugging around an empty bag?

SANTA

I gotta go.

NEAL

Where? How? Answer me!

SANTA

I'm Santa! I've got to get back
to the North Pole. The reindeer
will take me.

NEAL

And where are the reindeer?

WORKSHOP

QUINTIN

Someone get me in touch with
Santa now!

ELF

We've lost all communications.

MRS. CLAUS

What's going on?

BERNARD

We've lost contact with Santa.

MRS. CLAUS

What's that mean?

QUINTIN

I don't know what's going on
down there. But I'll tell you
this. If your sister and
brother-in-law can convince him
that he's not Santa... we'll
never get him back.

MRS. CLAUS

What?

BERNARD

It's a matter of faith. If he
stops believing... we'll lose
him... forever!

NEAL AND LAURA'S

SANTA
The reindeer... they're... out
on the roof.

NEAL
Are they?

SANTA
Yes. Out on the roof.

NEAL
There's nothing on the roof,
Scott.

SANTA
There is.

EXT. NEAL AND LAURA'S HOUSE.

Neal, Laura and Santa are looking up.

NEAL
What do you see, Scott? Tell us
what you see.

NEAL'S POV OF THE ROOF

It's a roof like any other roof. That is, chimney,
gutters and no sleigh.

BACK TO SCENE

LAURA
There's nothing up there!
Where's my sister?!

SANTA
Quintin?

NEAL
There's no Quintin here, Scott.
There's no sleigh.

SANTA
Quintin?

NEAL
There's no Santa Claus.

SANTA
There is! I'm Santa Claus!
You're trying to confuse me.

NEAL
What is it you're confused
about?

SANTA
I'm not listening to you
anymore!

NEAL
Why? Why won't you listen to
us? It sounds stupid, doesn't
it?

(with disdain)
You're Santa Claus. Look at
you!

(shouting)
Where's your wife? What have
you done with her?

SANTA
(angry)
I haven't done anything with
her! She's at the North Pole
with...

NEAL
With who?! Quintin? The elves!
Is Quintin an elf? Are you
living with elves up there,
Scott?!

LAURA
Let us help you. You'll be
fine. Just tell us where Lynn
is.

NEAL
We won't hurt you. We just want
to help.

SANTA
You make it sound stupid. It
isn't!

NEAL

Then you say it. Tell me where you live. Tell me about the elves. Tell me how reindeer fly! Look up on the roof. Tell me, Scott. You try and make it sound not stupid!

SANTA

I... I don't know.

NEAL

That's the first intelligent thing you've said since you got here. Now why don't you put down that bag and come with us?

INT. WORKSHOP

QUINTIN

We're gonna lose him. This is not good.

BERNARD

No! We won't lose him. Get those reindeer back to the Miller's.

QUINTIN

It's been too long. There'll be spotted.

BERNARD

I don't give a damn! When Santa goes up to that roof I want that sleigh there to bring him home!

QUINTIN

You mean "if" he goes back to the roof.

Bernard stares at Quintin.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)

(to Elf) Get the sleigh back to there as soon as you get contact re-established.

INT. NEAL AND LAURA'S

Santa is sitting on the sofa. Neal is on one side, Laura on the other. Santa's taken his hat off. He's sipping a from a glass of water. He looks confused and disoriented.

NEAL
Feeling better?

SANTA
I... I guess so.

NEAL
You ready to talk?

SANTA
Yeah.

LAURA
Where's Lynn?

SANTA
I'm not sure.

NEAL
That's ok. We'll work it out.
Now, this is important. What's
your name?

SANTA
I'm... I'm... Scott. Scott
Calvin.

NEAL
Why are you dressed like that?

SCOTT
I don't know.

NEAL
Will you let us help you?

SCOTT
Yes. Help me. Please. Help
me.

WORKSHOP

An Elf rushes up to Quintin at the Control Board.

ELF
Got it! We've got 'em back.

QUINTIN
(in microphone) Santa do you
read me? Santa, this is
Quintin, come in...

He's answered by static.

NEAL AND LAURA'S

CLOSE ON SANTA'S HAT ON THE FLOOR.

Quintin's small voice is heard coming from the hat.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL SANTA LYING ON THE COUCH WITH A
RAG OVER HIS EYES.

NEAL
(whispering
to Laura)
We can't push him. He'll come
around, but it'll take time. Be
patient.

Scott sits up and looks around.

SCOTT
Where am I?

NEAL
You're with us, Scott. You'll
be alright.

SCOTT
Where's Lynn?

NEAL
She's fine.

Dave, Neal and Laura's, son enters.

DAVE
Daddy?

LAURA
Go back to sleep, honey.

DAVE
I heard talking...

Dave sees Scott on the couch.

DAVE
Santa!

NEAL
No, son. It's Uncle Scott.

SCOTT
Hi, Dave.

DAVE
Uncle Scott?

SCOTT
Uh huh.

Dave comes up to Scott.

DAVE
Are you really Uncle Scott?

SCOTT
I... yeah.

Dave and Scott are now face to face. Dave stares into Scott's eyes. He studies Scott's face.

DAVE
You're not Uncle Scott!

LAURA
Dave, go to sleep.

SCOTT
Dave?

Dave continues to stare at Scott.

DAVE
You're Santa Claus! You're not my uncle. You're Santa!

Dave gives Scott a big hug.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Did you bring it... did you, Santa?

NEAL
David! Go to your room now!

Scott gets up and gets his bag. He reaches inside.
He pulls out a skateboard.

DAVE
You did! You remembered! I
love you, Santa!

Scott picks up his hat and puts it on.

QUINTIN (OVER)
...you read me? Come in,
Santa... do you--

SANTA
Quintin!

QUINTIN (OVER)
Santa! Are you alright?

Santa gives Dave a big hug.

SANTA
I am now!

QUINTIN (OVER)
Well, I don't mean to be
indelicate but you wanna get the
hell out of there?

SANTA
I'm on my way home.
(to Neal and
Laura)
Look at you. Two grown-ups
trying to get rid of Santa
Claus. You oughta be ashamed of
yourselves. Take a good look at
me. You know who I am.
(with pride)
I'm Santa Claus!
(scolding)
And you two have been very
naughty!

Santa rips off a pom pom and lobs it... then, he's
gone.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAWN

Quintin takes off his headset and rubs his eyes.
The rest of the elves relax, too. It's been a long
night and they're all showing signs of fatigue.

BERNARD
Hell of a night.

QUINTIN
You said it.

Quintin takes out a small black leather case and opens it. It looks like the kind of case you'd keep cigars in, but Quintin takes out a lollipop. He offers one to Bernard. Bernard declines. Quintin unwraps it and begins to lick.

SFX: A LOUD ALARM.

MRS. CLAUS
My god, what's that?

BERNARD
I don't know. Quintin?

Quintin puts on the headset, quickly.

QUINTIN
Santa, do you read me? Santa--

SANTA (OVER)
(with grave concern)
Quintin... I read... I think...
Whoa, boy... We've been hit!
Looks like a... maybe an F-15...
can't tell...

QUINTIN
Damage report?

SANTA (OVER)
We're still flying...
sluggish... going to...
(static)... read me...?

QUINTIN
You're breaking up... switch
over to emergency frequency...
repeat, emergency frequency!

EXT. THE SLEIGH

Santa is trying hard to control the reindeer, but they're flying wildly. The sleigh is bobbing and weaving. Santa has no apparent control.

SANTA
I can't read you, Quintin. I'm
gonna switch over to emergency
frequency...

Santa moves some dials around on the control panel.

QUINTIN (OVER)
... to emergency frequency...
repeat, switch--

SANTA
Got it! I read you, Quintin.

QUINTIN (OVER)
Damage report.

SANTA
They're still in pursuit. The
jamming signal isn't working and
they made visual contact before
I could set the bells!

QUINTIN (OVER)
Activate the smoke screen and
execute the emergency diagonal
decent. Do you remember...

SANTA
Roger!

Smoke begins to pour out of the rear of the sleigh.
At the same time the reindeer begin a sharp diagonal
decent. Overhead, the F-15 continues to fly on and
is soon out of sight.

QUINTIN (OVER)
Now! Hit the jamming sequence,
now!

SANTA
They're too fast. I see him
coming around. I'm gonna go
lower and try to lose 'em!

INT. WORKSHOP

BERNARD
Can he do it?

QUINTIN
I don't know, Bernard. Those F-15's are pretty sophisticated.

AN ELF approaches.

ELF
Quintin?

QUINTIN
Not now, Larry!

LARRY
I think I have an idea.

They turn to him. Larry looks back at them.

QUINTIN
Well?!

LARRY
The pole. Santa's real close to Magnetic North. If he can get there and stay low enough won't the F-15 radar get all jammed up by the magnetism?

Quintin ponders this for a moment.

QUINTIN
By golly, you're right! I love you, Larry!

Quintin is now furiously sucking on the lollipop.

EXT. THE SLEIGH

SANTA
... Quintin! It's no good! I can't shake them!

QUINTIN (OVER)
Don't panic. Listen. I think we have a solution. Keep heading down... as low as you can go. You'll hit the Magnetic Pole soon and you should be able to lose 'em there. But you gotta get there quick.

SANTA
Roger! Sounds good--

There's a GREAT EXPLOSION very close to the sleigh.

SANTA (CONT'D)
We've been hit! We've been hit!

QUINTIN (OVER)
How bad?

SANTA
Can't tell... oh my god... no!

QUINTIN (OVER)
What? What is it?

SANTA
Comet! Comet's been hit!

INT. WORKSHOP

Bernard runs up to Quintin. He puts his hand over the microphone so that he can talk to Quintin without Santa hearing.

BERNARD
He's gonna have to cut him loose.

QUINTIN
I know.

BERNARD
He'll never make it if he doesn't.

QUINTIN
I know!

Quintin pulls Bernard's hand off the mike.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)
Santa, do you read me?

SANTA (OVER)
Roger, Quintin.

QUINTIN
Look. It's like this. Dead weight is gonna bog you down. You gotta cut Comet loose. The rest can bring you in fast enough.

SANTA (OVER)
(shocked)
What? No! I won't do it!

QUINTIN
I know how you feel--

SANTA (OVER)
He's just hit, Quintin. He's
not dead. I can see him. He's
alive! I'm not cutting him
loose.

QUINTIN
You'll never make it pulling a
lame reindeer--

LARRY
They're closing in, Quintin.
It's gonna be close.

QUINTIN
Now! Cut him loose now or
you're not gonna make it!

EXT. THE SLEIGH

SANTA
(with fierce
determination)
We're a team up here. Either we
all come back together or--

INT. WORKSHOP

The only sound in the room is HARSH STATIC. They
listen to this for a long while.

LARRY
(sadly)
We've lost contact.

MRS. CLAUS
Oh my god...

BERNARD
No.

QUINTIN
He could have made it. He could
have...

The STATIC continues.

BERNARD
Damnit, Quintin! Can't you
tell?

QUINTIN
Larry?

LARRY
We saw a blast on the screen.
Could have been from the F-15.
Then there was nothing. He
might be over the pole.

Pause.

QUINTIN
We'll know for sure in two
minutes.

MRS. CLAUS
I'm going outside.

Mrs. Claus begins to leave.

BERNARD
Wait. I'll come with you.

Bernard follows her out. Slowly, one by one the
REST OF THE ELVES exit, too. Their work is now
done. Quintin is left alone in Command Central. He
looks up at the blank screen. The STATIC now sounds
deafening. Quintin flips a switch and the room goes
DEADLY SILENT.

EXT. THE HANGAR - DAWN

Hundreds of elves look skyward. The night sky is
about to give up its darkness. A SILENCE, the likes
of which can only be produced by hundreds of caring
individuals, surrounds the North Pole. It is a
moment of reckoning. Faintly, a TINY LONE VOICE
SOUNDS.

VOICE
There! Over there! Look!

The mass turns to the same direction. There in the
lightening sky a blurry object is seen in the
distance.

ANOTHER VOICE

What is that? Is it...

The object gets closer. Soon it comes into focus. It is clearly a sleigh being pulled by seven... no, eight reindeer. A TUMULTOUS CHEER RINGS OUT.

VOIVE

(joyous)

It's them!

Bernard looks at Mrs. Claus. She lifts Bernard high in the air and then embraces him.

BERNARD

Hey! I never had any doubt!

Quintin is seen in the background.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Quintin! You old wizard, you!
Come here.

Mrs. Claus puts Bernard down and he runs to Quintin. They pause, stare at each other and then break into a dance that only elves can do.

CLOSE ON:

The sleigh as it lands near the hangar. Comet, limping along, leads the pack. The sleigh comes to a stop and Santa Claus gets out.

SANTA

(urgently)

Quick!

FIVE ELVES run up and begin to care for Comet. Santa stands next to them.

SANTA (CONT'D)

How ya' feeling, boy?

Comet nods.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Ho, ho ho!

BERNARD (OFF)

Hey, you! In the red suit!

Santa gets down on one knee and opens his arms.
Bernard runs to him and is lifted high in the air.

SANTA
Well! That was fun.

Quintin enters the scene. He's now sucking on the
lollipop stick.

QUINTIN
Not bad. Not bad at all.

Santa lifts him, too. The three rejoice. Santa
stops, suddenly. He looks off.

SANTA'S POV

Mrs. Claus is standing across the way. She's
smiling, yet tears are rolling down her cheek.

BACK TO SCENE

Santa puts down Bernard and Quintin and moves toward
his wife and she to him. They embrace. He twirls
her around with a hearty, "Ho, Ho, Ho!"

MRS. CLAUS
You're wonderful.

SANTA
No. I'm just Santa Claus.

BERNARD
Alright, come on, everybody.
We've only got a year to
prepare. Let's move it.

The crowd begins to disperse. As it clears, Santa
sees Judy.

SANTA
Hi.

JUDY
Hi.

Pause.

JUDY (CONT'D)
Can I get you something?

SANTA
What do you think?

JUDY
Cocoa?

SANTA
Ho, ho ho! And a fresh donut,
too!

JUDY
Anything you want... boss.

Judy exits. Santa, Mrs. Claus, Bernard and Quintin
are left alone. They begin to walk toward the
HOUSE.

SANTA
I'm kinda glad.

BERNARD
'Bout what.

Santa stops and looks at the other three.

SANTA
I'm kinda glad... that Christmas
comes but once a year.

They all look at him for a moment. Then they all
burst out laughing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEAL AND LAURA'S LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS
MORNING

Neal and Laura are asleep on the floor, next to the
tree. They stir.

NEAL
(groggy)
You ok?

LAURA
Huh?

NEAL
What happened?

LAURA
I... I don't know. I fell
asleep. He didn't show.

NEAL
I thought he would. I really
thought he--

Neal stares toward the tree.

LAURA
What?

NEAL
Look.

THEIR POV

Under the tree are two presents. One marked,
"Neal" the other, "Laura".

BACK TO SCENE

NEAL
Did you put those there?

Laura shakes her head. They pick up their
respective package. They begin to open them.
Inside each is a beautiful velvet box. The kind in
which you'd find an expensive watch. They open the
box. They each remove its contents. They hold it
up. It's not a watch at all. Inside each of the
beautiful velvet boxes is a nice peice of coal. A
tag hangs from each piece. On the tag is a note.

CLOSE UP: ONE OF THE NOTES.

It reads: "NEXT YEAR... YOU'D BETTER BE NICE."

FINAL FADE: