

"THE SANTA CLAUSE"

A screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

ESTABLISHING SHOT

EXT. THE HOUSE OF SCOTT CALVIN - DUSK

It's winter. The house is sparsely decorated for the Christmas Season. A string of colored lights rims the door frame, but one side has come loose and hangs down.

A taxi pulls up. A WOMAN and CHILD get out.

WOMAN  
(to the driver)  
Wait here.

She takes the boy's hand and leads him up the path to the front door.

EXT. FRONT PORCH

The door opens. SCOTT CALVIN stands there. He gets down on one knee and opens his arms.

SCOTT  
Hey, Sport!

The boy reluctantly gives his dad a hug.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
(to the woman)  
Hi, Laura. Wanna come in for a minute?

LAURA  
I got a cab waiting.

SCOTT  
One minute. It's Christmas Eve.

Laura gestures to the taxi driver to wait. They all go into the house.

INT. THE FOYER

There are more minimal decorations. An artificial tree sits near the fire place. It's slightly crooked. There are many presents under the tree.

SCOTT

Hey, Sport, why don't you go  
look under the tree? I think  
most of those are for you.

The boy exits to the tree.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

(to Laura)

I've got something for you.

LAURA

I wish you hadn't.

Scott hands her a present.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I didn't get you anything.

SCOTT

You're letting me have Tim for  
Christmas... that's gift enough.

LAURA

Come on, Scott. You know if  
there was any way I could bring  
him to New York with me, I  
would. Don't make this seem  
like anything more than it is.

SCOTT

Right. I guess I'm cheaper than  
a baby sitter.

LAURA

This is an important week for  
Neal. Tim wouldn't have a good  
time.

SCOTT

I still don't get it.

LAURA

Neal is being honored by the  
American Psychiatric Society for  
his work--

SCOTT

(interrupting)

No. I get that part. I just  
can't figure what you see in  
that bloated head shrinker.

LAURA

Let's not do this now.

SCOTT

No, I'm serious. I think this guy's got you under some kind of hypnotic spell. Shrinks do that kind of stuff, ya' know?

LAURA

There's so much you don't understand... about Neal, about me... about psychology.

There is a HORN HONKING from outside.

LAURA

My cab's waiting.

SCOTT

Aren't you going to open your present?

Slowly, she does. Inside is a picture frame.

CLOSE ON THE FRAME

It's a photo of Laura, Scott and Tim on a beach.

BACK TO SCENE

SCOTT

(softly)

That was two summers ago. Remember? What happened to us? What did I do that was so wrong?

LAURA

It's not you. It's... No, it is you. It's...

The taxi's HORN HONKS again.

LAURA (CONT'D)

...it's a very nice picture, Scott, but it doesn't change anything. Neal and I are getting married in February.

SCOTT

You know I'll fight you for custody.

LAURA

You'll lose.

Tim enters.

TIM

There aren't that many presents  
out there.

SCOTT

Well, Santa hasn't brought his  
load yet.

TIM

There's no Santa.

SCOTT

Of course there is.

TIM

Uncle Neal said there isn't and  
he's a doctor.

SCOTT

(hurt)

Uncle Neal?

Scott shoots Laura a dirty look.

LAURA

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

SCOTT

Well put. I'm sure our eight  
year old son appreciates the  
endorsement.

LAURA

We try to give Tim 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.

TIM

You two fighting again?

SCOTT

Just disagreeing, Sport. You see, Mom and Uncle  
(wincing)

Neal don't believe in Santa Claus because they've been naughty and they know that Santa will bring them a lump of coal. You and I know better. There is a Santa Claus. You'll see. He'll bring you more presents once you go to sleep.

TIM

I don't know. Seems kinda baby-ish to believe in that kind of stuff.

A longer HORN HONK from the cab.

SCOTT

You better go. We wouldn't want to keep Doctor Brilliant waiting at the airport.

Laura gets down on her knees to hug Tim. He gives her a big hug back.

LAURA

I'm really gonna miss you, Sweetie.

TIM

I wanna go with you. Why can't I go with you?

LAURA

You and Daddy will have a great Christmas. And I'll see you right after New Year's.

TIM  
(sniffing back tears)  
I know.

LAURA  
I love you, Tim.

TIM  
I love you, too.

She stands up and starts to leave. She stops, turns around and reaches into her purse. Scott beams with delight. He thinks she's got a present for him. Laura takes out a sheet of paper and hands it to Scott. His smile drops.

LAURA  
Here are the numbers where you  
can reach me.

SCOTT  
(under his breath)  
You could've at least gift  
wrapped it.

LAURA  
What?

SCOTT  
Nothing. Have a good time.

LAURA  
You too.

She gives one last kiss to Tim.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
'Bye.

Scott opens the door for her and she leaves. He watches her go and after a moment, he closes the door.

Scott turns back to Tim who is holding the picture frame that Laura left behind.

TIM  
Why were you wearing an  
innertube?

SCOTT  
(looking at  
the photo)  
I'm not wearing an innertube.

TIM  
What's that around your waist?

SCOTT  
(beat)  
Muscles, Tim. A ring of  
muscles.  
(beat)  
Hey, I bet you're hungry, huh?  
I made us a special Christmas  
dinner.

INT. DINING ROOM - THAT EVENING

Scott and Tim are finishing their TV Dinners.

SCOTT  
So. Not bad for a bachelor,  
huh?

TIM  
I don't like turkey.

SCOTT  
Everybody likes turkey.

TIM  
Uncle Neal doesn't.

SCOTT  
Do you have to do everything  
Uncle  
(winces)  
Neal does?

TIM  
You don't like him, do you, Dad?

Scott doesn't answer.

TIM (CONT'D)  
You mad 'cause I'm gonna be  
living with him and not you?



SCOTT

You know, Tim, if you really wanted to, you could live with me. We'd have a great time.

TIM

When?

SCOTT

When what?

TIM

I see you a lot and we never have a great time.

SCOTT

Sure we do.

TIM

No we don't.

SCOTT

How can you say that? I take you to ball games and the zoo and the park and... and museums. That's fun.

TIM

Nuh uh. That's just doing stuff.

SCOTT

That's what having a good time is... doing stuff.

TIM

We're always just rushin' around. Even if I don't wanna do something, you make me do it. You never ask me what I wanna do. You never just talk to me like--

Tim stops himself.

SCOTT

Like who?

(beat)

Like Uncle Neal?

TIM

He listens to me. He understands me.

SCOTT

I understand you.

TIM

Not when I tell you things.

SCOTT

What're you talking about?  
Don't I listen to you?

TIM

Not like Uncle Neal.

There's an uncomfortable pause while Scott takes this all in.

SCOTT

So, you don't wanna live with me?

TIM

I think I better live with Mom.  
You know... I think that'd be better.

SCOTT

(trying to show  
he's not hurt)  
Yeah, I guess you're right.

Pause.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

So, you wanna open some presents?

TIM

Yeah, I guess. If you say so.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

A few of the presents have been opened. There is Nintendo paraphernalia all over the floor. Scott and Tim are sitting on the floor. Scott is reading.

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

TIM  
What's that?

SCOTT  
What?

TIM  
A rose suchak ladder?

SCOTT  
(amused)  
No. "Arose such a clatter." It  
means there was a noise coming  
from the roof. Noise...  
clatter.

TIM  
Oh.

SCOTT  
(continuing)  
"I sprang from my bed to see  
what was the matter..."

TIM  
Dad?

SCOTT  
Yeah?

TIM  
Do you really believe in Santa?

SCOTT  
Well... yeah. I do.

TIM  
How do reindeer fly? They don't  
have any wings.

SCOTT  
They use that fairy dust stuff.

TIM  
No. That's from Peter Pan.

SCOTT

Oh.

TIM

So, how do they fly without any wings? And if Santa is so fat, how does he get down the chimneys? And what about people who don't have fireplaces? How does he get into their houses?

SCOTT

Look, Tim. Believing in something sometimes means that you just believe in it. I mean, reindeer fly, because that's how Santa gets around. You can't stop believing in things just 'cause... it doesn't make any sense.

TIM

So, you really believe in Santa?

SCOTT

Yeah. Yeah, Sport, I do.

TIM

(thinking)

We better leave some cookies and milk out, then. Just in case.

SCOTT

That'd be great.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

The only sound is the steady HUM of the humidifier. Scott is asleep. There is a faint NOISE. After a moment, it gets a bit LOUDER. Tim enters the bedroom and stands next to the bed. He hears the NOISE.

TIM

Dad?

Scott turns over in his sleep. Tim goes to Scott and nudges him.

SCOTT

What is it?

TIM  
I heard a noise.

SCOTT  
I didn't hear ...

There is the NOISE again.

TIM  
There.

SCOTT  
What is that?

TIM  
It's coming from outside. I'm  
scared.

SCOTT  
It's nothing. Probably the  
wind. Go back to sleep.

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.

TIM  
Maybe it's Santa.

SCOTT  
Not now, Tim.

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

TIM  
Neat! Is it real, Dad? Can I  
shoot him?

SCOTT  
I'm not gonna shoot anybody.  
I'm just gonna scare him.

There's another NOISE.

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
I'm going outside. You wait  
here.

He starts to leave and then turns back.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
Tim? Do you know how to call  
the police?

TIM  
Sure. Nine-one-one. Everybody  
knows that.

SCOTT  
Well, if you hear anything...  
funny, I want you to call them.  
Okay?

TIM  
Sure.

SCOTT  
Wait here.

EXT. BACK PORCH

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

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

HIS POV

He sees a shadow of a man near the chimney.

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 goes to him. The man is lying perfectly  
still. Scott gives him a little nudge with his  
foot. The man doesn't move.

Tim comes out in his bathrobe.

TIM  
Neat, Dad! You got him!

SCOTT  
Stay back, Tim.

Scott looks at the body. The man is dressed in a Santa Claus suit. He approaches him. Scott gently nudges him again; still no movement. Scott turns the man over. The man wears a red hat and white beard.

Tim comes up behind him.

TIM  
(excited)  
It is Santa.  
(sudden realization)  
You killed him! You killed  
Santa Claus.

SCOTT  
Don't be silly. There is no  
Santa Claus.

TIM  
You told me there was.

SCOTT  
Well... there is. This just  
isn't him. He was trying to...  
I don't know... break into the  
house or something. And I  
didn't kill him. He fell off  
the roof.

TIM  
Well who is he, then? It looks  
like Santa.

Scott reaches down to take off the beard.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
It's real. The beard. It won't  
come off.

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

XCU: THE CARD

It reads: "SANTA CLAUS, NORTH POLE".

BACK TO SCENE

TIM

What're you gonna do, Dad? Want me to call call the police?

SCOTT

I... I dunno.

Scott turns the card over.

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. Scott and Tim 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.

INT. LIVING ROOM

TIM

Told you, Dad. It is Santa. What're you gonna do now?

SCOTT

(in disbelief)

How'd those reindeer get up there?

TIM

They flew! Just like you said.

SCOTT

Reindeer don't fly, Tim. I don't even know if there is such a thing as reindeer.



TIM

Then, what're those things up on  
the roof?

Scott shakes his head. He has no answer.

TIM (CONT'D)

You gonna put on the suit like  
the note said? Are you?

Scott is speechless.

TIM (CONT'D)

'Cause if you do and you get on  
the sleigh... I wanna go too.  
It'll be great!

SCOTT

(firmly)

Look, Tim. There's no such  
thing as Santa Claus and there's  
no such thing as flying  
reindeer.

TIM

But you said--

SCOTT

Forget about what I said. Now,  
I don't know what's going on  
here... but... I just don't know  
what to do.

TIM

Put on the suit. The reindeer  
will know what to do. That's  
what the note said. That's what  
you should do.

Scott looks at Tim. Then at at the card again.

TIM (CONT'D)

Go 'head, Dad. Put it on the  
suit. The reindeer will know  
what to do. I wanna go, too.  
Please. Can I go, too?

Scott opens the door and starts to exit. He appears  
to be in some euphoric trance.

TIM

Yay! And I'm going, too, right?

Pause.

SCOTT  
Put your coat on. It's cold  
outside.

EXT. THE BACK YARD - NIGHT

Scott sees that there is a ladder up against the house. He and Tim go to it.

SCOTT  
Where'd this come from?

TIM  
Look here, Dad. It's like in  
the poem.

They both look at a medal plaque on the ladder which reads: "THE ROSE SUCHAK LADDER COMPANY."

SCOTT  
Huh?

TIM  
"Out by the roof there's a rose  
suchak ladder."

SCOTT  
(confused)  
Yeah. Like the poem.

Scott goes over to the dead Santa and puts on the jacket and hat. He then holds the ladder for Tim.

SCOTT  
Be careful... and just sit  
there, till I get up.

Tim climbs the ladder and gets to the roof. Scott follows.

THE ROOF

Scott and Tim carefully approach 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.

TIM

Neat. Put it on, Dad.

Scott puts on the beard.

TIM (CONT'D)

You look just like him. You really do.

Scott gets in the sleigh. The reindeer remain calm.

SCOTT

Come on, Sport. Sit next to me.

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

Hold on, Tim. Hold on tight!

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, WE 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.

TIM

Boy. They fly pretty fast.

SCOTT

What do I do now?

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

TIM

Toys! Get the bag of toys.

It looks as if Comet nods.

SCOTT

How will I know what to leave?

TIM

Maybe there's a list in the bag.

Scott moves to the back of the sleigh. He picks up the bag.

SCOTT

It's heavy!

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

TIM

Careful, Dad.

SCOTT

I'm alright.

Scott begins to slowly rise off the roof.

TIM

Hey, Dad! Look. You're flying!

Scott looks down and sees that he is indeed hovering. He tries to get his feet back down but to no avail.

SCOTT

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.

(MORE)

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.

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.

TIM

Wow! How'd you do that?!  
What'd it feel like?

SCOTT

Let's get outta here, Sport.  
The bag's empty. We're done.

They cross to the sleigh and Scott puts the bag in the back.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Let's go home, Comet.

They get back into the sleigh and Scott 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?!

TIM

Do it again, Dad. Go down the chimney again.

SCOTT

Tim, the bag's empty. There's nothing more to leave.

Comet looks at him.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

(to Comet)

It's empty! Now, take us 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

TIM

What'd you leave, Dad? I thought you said the bag was empty.

SCOTT

I guess I was wrong. Hey, you hungry?

TIM

Starved.

Scott hands him the cookies.

TIM (CONT'D)

Where's you get these? Someone leave them for you?

SCOTT

Uh huh.

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

SCOTT (CONT'D)

(to Comet)

What's the matter, boy?

Comet rears back his head.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

You hungry, too?

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 ...

TIM

Let me try.

Tim feeds the reindeer, too.

Scott and Tim read the name tags as they feed them.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

"... Prancer. Donder, Blitzen.  
Dasher. "

TIM

"Dancer, Vixen. Cupid. Comet."

They pet each one. The reindeer in turn nuzzle them.

SCOTT

I guess we go on.

Scott and Tim get in the sleigh. They seem a bit more relaxed now. Indeed, Scott appears to be completely comfortable in the task at hand.

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.

TIM

On Comet! On Cupid! On Donder and Blitzen!

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

They fly off, into the darkness.



## MONTAGE - THE REST OF THE NIGHT:

1. Scott and Tim comfortably settle into the 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!  
 (to Tim)  
 'Morning, Sport! Ho! Ho! Ho!

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

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
 ... Merry Christmas to all, and  
 to all a good night!

SLOW 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 with two lights, like at an airport.

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 and Tim.

TIM  
 (taking it all in)  
 Cool!

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?

TIM

I'm thirsty... and hungry.

BERNARD

Who's this?

SCOTT

My son. Tim.

TIM

Hi.

BERNARD

Hiya, Sport.

TIM

Hey, Dad, he called me Sport... just like you.

BERNARD

Why not? You look like a Sport.

Tim laughs.

BERNARD

(to LARRY,  
an Elf)

Larry, take Time here and get him some chow.

Tim and Larry exit.

SCOTT  
(calling after  
them)

Tim!

BERNARD  
He'll be okay.  
(beat)  
So. What's on your mind?

SCOTT  
Look, I don't know what's going  
on around here... all I know is  
that I just spent Christmas Eve  
flying around in a sleigh and I  
got a dead body in my back yard.

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. Scott follows.

EXT. THE HANGAR - MORNING

Bernard is seen coming out of 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

Is too. Did you or did you not read the card?

SCOTT

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

BERNARD

Then you're the new Santa Claus. In putting on the hat and jacket you accepted the contract.

SCOTT

What contract?

BERNARD

The card you pulled out of Santa's wallet. You said you read it. So, when you stepped into the sleigh, you fell subject to the "Santa Clause."

SCOTT

What? Wait, you're saying that card was a contract?

BERNARD

Yup.

SCOTT

And I... what?... became subject to being Santa Claus...?

BERNARD

No. You fell subject to the "Santa Clause."

SCOTT

What Santa Claus? The dead guy?

BERNARD

Not Santa Claus the person. "Santa Clause" the clause. The Clause in the contract which says you're Santa Claus.

SCOTT

Hey, I'm no lawyer, but that little card was no contract.

BERNARD

You still have it?

Scott looks through his pockets and finds the card. He hands it to Bernard who points to the bottom of the card.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

See. right here, in fine print.  
(reading)

"Santa Clause: in putting on this suit and entering the sleigh, the wearer waives any and all rights to any previous identity real or implied and fully and without reservation accepts the duties and responsibilities of Santa Claus until such time that wearer becomes unable to do so either by accident or design, albeit, notwithstanding any and all liability which wearer and wearer's heirs hereby waive judgement against management."

(to Scott)

The Santa Clause. It's all very standard.

SCOTT

That's ridiculous! I'm not--

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 read the card. You put on the suit! That clearly falls under the "Santa Clause" so now you're Santa! Okay!

SCOTT

And what about this dead Santa?  
What's gonna happen when he's  
found? You know, where I come  
from people frown upon dead  
people in your back yard.

BERNARD

You don't have to get snotty.  
It's been taken care of.

Bernard goes to a window and points out. Scott  
follows and looks out the window.

SCOTT'S POV

Three reindeer pull a cart with a casket on it. The  
cart is surrounded by elves.

SCOTT

Is that... how'd you get him  
here?

BERNARD

We're kind of... magical around  
here. It helps lighten the work  
load.

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 exits.

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

Thanks. Good night, sir.



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.

Tim bursts into the room.

TIM

(all excited)

He was here! He was here! You should see all the toys. Come on, get up... get up!

Scott gets out of bed. He notices the pajamas he's got on. Suddenly, he runs out of the room.

EXT. BACK YARD

Scott frantically looks around for the body. There's no sign of it. He runs back into the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Scott slumps down next to the tree. Around the tree are many new presents.

TIM

Dad, you okay? Are you having a heart attack?

SCOTT

What?

TIM

A heart attack? Joseph's dad had a heart attack and Joseph said that his dad fell right on the floor. What's a heart attack?

SCOTT  
A heart attack? It's... it's  
like having a sore on your  
heart... like... I don't know...  
I'm okay.

Scott runs his finger over the "SC" monogram on his  
red pajamas.

TIM  
I think they look kinda girly.

SCOTT  
What?

TIM  
Those 'jammies. I think they're  
girly.

SCOTT  
You've seen them before?

TIM  
Yeah.

SCOTT  
When?

TIM  
You were wearing 'em last night.

Scott looks at the monogram.

SCOTT  
"S.C." Scott Calvin.

TIM  
Yeah, 'cause that's your name.

SCOTT  
(dreamily)  
Santa was here last night.

TIM  
I know. Let's open the  
presents!

SCOTT  
Santa fell off our roof and died  
and then we--

He cuts himself off. He looks at Tim who is a busy opening the presents. He doesn't hear his dad.

TIM  
Alright! A Super Soaker Gun.  
Just what I wanted!

Scott shakes his head, trying to clear it.

SCOTT  
This is crazy.

TIM  
What?

SCOTT  
Nothing. Just some crazy dream  
I had.

TIM  
(opening another  
present)  
Galaxia Battle Cruiser!  
Alright, Dad! I wanted this,  
too!

Scott smiles at Tim. He looks down at the pajamas,  
still a bit confused.

SCOTT  
These aren't my pajamas.

TIM  
She gave them to you.

SCOTT  
Who?

TIM  
(opening a box)  
New Reeboks!

SCOTT  
She... who?

TIM  
(referring to  
the Reeboks)  
Mom said that these were too  
expensive! This is great!

Who? SCOTT

Mom. TIM

SCOTT  
(to himself)  
Laura? Laura gave these to me?

A smile comes to Scott's face as he shakes off the confusion.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
(excited)  
Come on, Sport. Let's open some more presents!

Scott and Tim rip into the presents. On this mayhem WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCOTT'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The tree is gone. So are the decorations. A small suitcase sits next to the fireplace. The doorbell RINGS. Tim runs in from the kitchen.

It's Mommy! TIM

INT. FOYER

Tim flings the door open and Laura is standing there.

Mommy! TIM

Hi, Sweety. LAURA

They hug and kiss.

Did you have a good time? LAURA (CONT'D)

Great. TIM

Scott approaches. He hasn't shaved in a week. His beard is coming in grayish-white.

SCOTT

Hi, Laura.

LAURA

Scott. I should have bought you a razor for Christmas.

SCOTT

How was New York?

LAURA

Beautiful. Neal was a big hit--

SCOTT

(cutting her off)

Yeah, that's great. Why doesn't he come in?

LAURA

He says that you take the anger you feel for our marriage failing and transfer it on to him.

SCOTT

Brilliant man. A big brain for such a pointy head.

Tim laughs.

LAURA

You all packed, Tim?

TIM

Yup.

LAURA

(to Scott)

I'll call you next week.

SCOTT

Yeah.

(to Tim)

Hey, Sport, I had a great time. I'm really gonna miss you.

TIM

Yeah, me too, Dad.

They hug.

SCOTT

'Bye, Laura.

He gives her a little peck on the cheek. She tries to avoid it.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Thanks for the P.J's.

LAURA

What?

SCOTT

The pajamas. I like 'em.

LAURA

What pajamas?

SCOTT

The red ones.

(to Tim)

Didn't you say Mom picked them out for you?

TIM

You mean the ones with the letters on them?

SCOTT

Yeah.

TIM

I think they're girly.

SCOTT

You said Mom gave them to me.

TIM

Nuh-uh. Judy gave them to you. Up at the North Pole. Don't you remember?

SCOTT

In my dream?

TIM

It was no dream. You and me and the reindeer flying. It was real neat.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

(to Laura)

It was neat, Mom. Dad was Santa and Bernard showed me the workshop. You should'a been there.

LAURA

Thanks for keeping his feet on the ground.

Neal HONKS the HORN.

Laura and Tim begin to leave.

SCOTT

Wait. Tim? It really happened? It wasn't a dream?

LAURA

Stop it, Scott.

(to Tim)

Go wait in the car, honey. I'll be right there.

TIM

'Bye, Dad.

Tim runs to the car.

LAURA

Confusing the boy isn't in his best interest. Now I know you feel you have some kind of custody case, but you don't. No judge is going to give you custody. Besides, you know he'd be better off with Neal and me.

SCOTT

I'm not trying to confuse the boy.

LAURA

Right. So I get to deal with the day to day responsibilities of raising a kid and you fill his head with Santa trips to the North Pole.

SCOTT  
 I'm not filling his head with  
 anything. I thought I had a  
 dream. That's all. I never  
 once--

Scott stops in mid-sentence. A stunned look comes  
 over his face. Suddenly, he runs out to the car.

EXT. NEAL'S CAR - DAY

Scott opens the back door where Tim is sitting and  
 sticks his head in the car. NEAL is behind the  
 wheel.

TIM  
 Hiya, Dad.

NEAL  
 Scott.

SCOTT  
 (to Tim)  
 What you said back there. Who  
 showed you the workshop? Who?

TIM  
 The elf.

SCOTT  
 What was his name?

TIM  
 Bernard.

Laura pulls Scott out of the car.

LAURA  
 What are you doing? What's  
 wrong?

SCOTT  
 Tim said "Bernard" showed him  
 the workshop.

LAURA  
 In the dream?

SCOTT  
 But I never mentioned Bernard to  
 him.



LAURA

So?

SCOTT

But that was his name.

LAURA

Whose name?

SCOTT

The elf's! His name was  
Bernard.

NEAL

What's this all about?

TIM

Dad took me to the North Pole  
and Bernard showed me the  
workshop.

NEAL

The North Pole?

TIM

He's the new Santa... 'cause the  
regular Santa fell off our roof  
and died.

NEAL

(to Laura)

Get in the car, honey.

LAURA

I can't believe you'd do this to  
your own son.

Scott stands there as she gets in the car. Laura  
rolls down the window.

LAURA (CONT'D)

And take a shave!

The car drives off.

INT. SCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

A calendar on the wall tells us that it's January  
sixth. Scott enters. He still hasn't shaved. His  
beard is coming in quite nicely. He takes off his  
coat and buzzes for his secretary.

(MORE)

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

Canada?

SCOTT

Further North?

JUDY

Where?

SCOTT

Never mind.

JUDY

You want the morning mail?

SCOTT

Huh? Yeah. Leave it on the desk.

She does.

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. Tim knows it happened. In your heart, you know that it's real, too. 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

"The Santa Clause." Under the provisions of "The Santa Clause," I'm the new Santa.

(beat)

So, what do I do now?

JUDY

Go over the list.

SCOTT

There must be a thousand pages.

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'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Scott's beard is a bit heavier. 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.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Scott ignores it. It RINGS again. Pause. Then a LOUD KNOCK on the door. Finally Scott goes to answer it.

FOYER

Scott opens the door. It's Laura.

LAURA

You really look silly with that beard.

SCOTT

Really? I think it suits me.

(beat)

Was I expecting you?

LAURA

I came to talk about Tim.

SCOTT

Why? He's okay, isn't he?

LAURA

He's fine, until he starts talking about you and the North Pole.

SCOTT

Oh. That.

LAURA

(still in the doorway)

Can I come in?

SCOTT

Yeah, sure.

DINING ROOM

LAURA

Scott, you've got to talk to Tim. Tell him it was all a dream. It's all he talks about.

SCOTT

I don't blame him. Besides, it wasn't a dream. It was a fantastic experience.

LAURA

Scott! This is serious. Neal thinks you've created this little fantasy in Tim's mind so he'd take sides with you over us.

SCOTT

Look, I know this is hard for you and the Head Doctor to understand, but it really happened. I know it and Tim knows it, too. I mean, look at all this stuff. Does this look like I made it up?

Laura looks at all the paper work on the table.

LAURA

What is this?

SCOTT

The list.

LAURA

What list?

SCOTT

You know. "Making a list, checking it twice... gonna find out who's--"

LAURA

(angry)

Stop it!

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)  
(collecting herself)  
Scott. I can see this is hard  
for you. I'll be very generous  
with visitation rights. But  
you're just not gonna get  
custody of our kid.

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

Laura starts to leave. She's angry. Scott follows  
her.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
Laura!

LAURA  
I don't want to talk about it.

Scott catches up to Laura and takes her arm. He  
turns her around.

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

Scott stops talking and just stares.

LAURA  
What?

SCOTT  
Put on your coat.

EXT. THE ROOF

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

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

Scott is looking around.

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

SCOTT

Just look.

They continue to search the area.

LAURA

Scott?

SCOTT

You find something?

LAURA

Did you check up here after the roofers finished?

SCOTT

What?

LAURA

Didn't you have the roof repaired last spring?... look at this.

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

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 Laura.

SCOTT

(excited)

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

Laura 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. Hoof marks!

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

SCOTT (CONT'D)

What do you make of this?

LAURA

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.

EXT. NEAL AND LAURA'S CAR - DAY

Neal is driving. Laura is sitting next to him.

LAURA

I tell you he really believes it.

NEAL

Honey, it's his way of dealing with this custody battle. He's trying to confuse you. And worse than that... he's trying to confuse Tim, too.

LAURA

But you have to see the lengths he's gone to. Hundreds of pages of names. Tracks on the roof. Fur with jingle bells on it.

NEAL

Laura, I deal with this kind of behavior all the time. The man didn't go to the North Pole. He did go up on the roof and make tracks for you to see. He did get a piece of animal fur and attach a bell to it. He did painstakingly make out a list of a thousand names. If you look at it like that... he seems pretty foolish, doesn't he?

LAURA

What about the hole in the tree?

NEAL

Coincidence. Could have been the wind. I mean, what sounds more plausible: the wind blew out a few branches or eight reindeer pulling a sleigh made the hole?

LAURA

I guess.

NEAL

You guess? The man's playing mind games with you. I'm only going to say this once. Your ex-husband is not Santa Claus.

Laura chuckles.

LAURA

I suppose it does sound silly.

NEAL

Exactly.

LAURA

And you don't think he's dangerous?

NEAL

He's perfectly harmless. Look at it this way. If and when this case gets to court, none of this is going to look very good for him. Trust me, he's not dangerous.

The car comes to a stop in front of a school. They wait for a moment, then Tim enters the car.

TIM

Hiya.

LAURA

Hi, honey.

NEAL

How are you, Tim?

TIM

Fine, I guess.

LAURA

Ready for a nice weekend with your dad?

TIM

You bet.

The drive off.

NEAL

Tim. Did your dad mention what he had planned for you guys?

TIM

I dunno. Maybe see a movie... or play some Nintendo.

NEAL

Sounds like fun.

EXT. A PARK - DAY

Scott and Tim are playing in the snow. After toppling over in a sled they lie there, laughing.

SCOTT

(catching his  
breath)

Hey, Sport... I got something I wanna show you.

TIM

What?

From his pocket, Scott takes out the piece of fur with the jingle bell on it.

TIM  
 Hey! That looks like it came  
 from Comet.

SCOTT  
 I think you're right.  
 (beat)  
 Here... listen.

Scott JINGLES THE BELL.

VOICE (OVER)  
 You rang?

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

BERNARD  
 Howdy.

Tim runs to him and gives him a hug.

TIM  
 Hiya, Bernard.

BERNARD  
 How ya' doing, Sport?

TIM  
 Great.

BERNARD  
 Howdy, Santa.

SCOTT  
 (nodding)  
 Bernard.

BERNARD  
 We need you up at the Pole.

SCOTT  
 Now?

BERNARD  
 Now's as good a time as any.

SCOTT  
 Can Tim come, too.

BERNARD  
 The more the merrier.

Scott looks at Tim. He takes his hand.

SCOTT  
You wanna go?

TIM  
You betcha'.

SCOTT  
(to Bernard)  
What are you waiting for? Let's  
go!

And then... They're gone!

EXT. FRONT PORCH OF SCOTT'S HOUSE - DAY

Neal and Laura are KNOCKING on the door and RINGING  
the doorbell. There's no answer.

LAURA  
He knows we're picking him up  
now.

NEAL  
Don't panic. He probably just  
lost track of the time.

Laura reaches into her purse and takes out a key.  
She opens the door. Then enter.

FOYER

LAURA  
(calling out)  
Tim?  
(beat)  
Scott?

NEAL  
Look.

Sitting in the FOYER is Tim's suitcase. Laura opens  
it up.

LAURA  
It's all packed.

NEAL  
See. They know we're coming  
today.

LAURA

Either that, or...

NEAL

What?

LAURA

I... I don't think this has been unpacked. I mean, I packed for Tim last Friday. I specifically remember putting this shirt on top.

NEAL

What are you saying?

LAURA

(calling out, louder)

Tim?

(pause)

They're not here. They're gone. I know it. He's taken him somewhere. You told me he was harmless. He's taken my baby. Where? Where could he have taken him?

(pause, then  
louder)

Where?!

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

Bernard, Scott and Tim are there. 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!

Judy approaches.

JUDY

Howdy, Sir.

SCOTT

(Happy)

Judy! Hey, I bet Tim could really go for a cup of your cocoa about right now. How 'bout it, Sport?

TIM

(excited)

You bet!

Judy and Tim exit.

SCOTT

(Waiting for them to leave)

Bernard. I gotta talk to you.

BERNARD

Shoot.

SCOTT

I was thinking about what happened to Santa... you know, on my roof... and... the thing is...

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 starts to walk away. Scott follows him 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

Not necessarily... well, yeah.

SCOTT

That's it then! I need protection.

BERNARD

And what do you propose?

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

What 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... Alright. This then. I'll take my chances with the planes, 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 permanent Santa.

SCOTT

Yeah! A permanent Santa! That's it.

BERNARD

You know, it's so crazy... it just might work.

SCOTT

Sure! It'd be great!

BERNARD

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

INT. NEAL MILLER'S OFFICE - DAY

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

LAURA

He's my ex-husband. The father of my son. I don't know if I can do this. I don't have the right to commit him... do I?

NEAL

You're Tim's mother. You have the right to protect him.

LAURA

You told me he wasn't in any danger--

NEAL

Tim will be fine. Understand Scott's delusion. He thinks he's Santa Claus. Now ask yourself this: would Santa hurt an eight year old boy? Trust me. Sign the papers.

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)

Scott will 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 Tim.

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 Tim?

BERNARD

They're fine.

LAURA

What have you done with my baby, 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

Can we please talk.

BERNARD

Sure.

Bernard sits on the chair next to Laura. His feet don't reech the floor. He smiles at her.

LAURA

Who are you?

BERNARD

I told you. I'm Bernard.

NEAL  
Where you from?

BERNARD  
Up North.

NEAL  
Canada?

BERNARD  
Further 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 commitment 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 Tim. 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 and Judy are leading Scott and Tim who are both blindfolded.

SCOTT

When can we look?

TIM

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 Tim 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

TIM

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? What're they doing?

BERNARD

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

QUINTIN, AN ELF, approaches them. Bernard makes the introductions.

BERNARD

Santa... this is Quintin, head of Research and Development.

SCOTT

(nodding)

Quintin.

Quintin wipes his hands on a rag and extends it to Scott. Quintin speaks in an English accent.

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.

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.

Quintin puts a new hat on Scott.

QUINTIN (CONT'D)

Ok... tell me what you hear.

SCOTT

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



QUINTIN

Your hat is lined with a two way radio. Everything I say will sound like that. The transmitter's in there, too. 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. 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, you'll look like a commercial airliner. 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 radio. 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 takes you directly over the Magnetic Pole. We'll lose radio contact. We've plotted a course to allow for minimum down time.

(MORE)

QUINTIN (CONT'D)

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)

New this year. Smoke screen.

INT. POLICE SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

DETECTIVE NUNZIO is addressing a GROUP OF POLICE OFFICERS. Nunzio stands behind a podium and in front of a projection screen.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO

Next slide...

A picture of Tim comes on the screen.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO (CONT'D)

This is the victim... Timothy Calvin. Caucasian male, eight years old, light brown hair, fifty-four inches tall, sixty-two pounds. Missing since February twenty-fourth. Last seen in the company of his father, Scott Calvin... slide.

A picture of Scott comes on the screen.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO (CONT'D)

You've all got this picture and a description of the alleged perpetrator. Now, on the behest of the boy's mother... we have Doctor Neal Miller here to fill you in on a psychiatric profile of Calvin. Doctor Miller is a noted psychiatrist and also the fiance of the victim's mother. Doctor Miller.

Neal takes his place at the podium.

NEAL

On or about last Christmas Eve, Scott Calvin got it in his mind that he was Santa Claus.

There's a burst of laughter from the audience.  
Nunzio stands up to silence them.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO

Knock it off!

A POLICEMAN

Hey, Nunzio? Why don't we just  
follow Rudolph's nose to track  
the perp?

More laughter.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO

Can it, Malone. A boy's  
missing, for god's sake. This  
ain't no joke.

The crowd is silenced. Neal continues.

NEAL

About a week ago, Mrs. Calvin  
received a phone call from her  
son. We taped the call. I'd  
like you to hear it.

Neal turns on a cassette player. The faces of the  
audience is PANNED as the tape plays.

LAURA (OVER)

Hello?

TIM (OVER)

Mom?

LAURA (OVER)

Tim! Honey, where are you? Are  
you alright?

TIM (OVER)

I'm fine. Dad and I are at the  
North Pole...

(static)

... to protect himself. Bernard  
says Dad could be the  
permanent...

(static)

... next Christmas.

LAURA (OVER)

What? I don't understand.  
Where are you?

TIM (OVER)  
It's great up here. We're  
having...  
(static)  
... elves need me. Gotta go.

LAURA (OVER)  
Tim! Wait. Where are you?

There's a pause while Laura waits for a response.  
She answered only by static.

Neal turns off the recorder.

NEAL  
We're dealing with a man who is  
so sure that he's Santa Claus,  
that he's been able to convince  
his son of it, too. Not only  
that... but he truly believes  
that he's at the North Pole...  
with the elves.

MALONE  
The North Pole? Hey, Nunzio,  
isn't that a bit out of our  
jurisdiction?

Laughter.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO  
Alright, Malone, that's enough.  
Doc here's got a plan. Go  
'head, sir.

NEAL  
I don't think Scott is anywhere  
around here. In fact, I really  
believe that he's as close to  
the North Pole as he could  
get... probably somewhere in  
Canada or Alaska. Finding him  
is out of the question. My plan  
is that we wait for him to come  
to us.

MALONE  
You wouldn't happen to know  
about when that would be, would  
you, Doc?

NEAL

As a matter of fact I know exactly when it would be. Scott will be back on Christmas Eve. He'll most likely have Tim with him. His ex-wife and I've been naughty in Scott's mind. He'll show up at my house on Christmas Eve. He has to. He must give us our lumps of coal, for Christmas.

More laughter.

NEAL (CONT'D)

(over the laughter)

Laugh if you must... but I'm sure of it. Scott Calvin will be at my house on Christmas Eve. As to where he is now... I have no idea. I only know that believing he's Santa... it's someplace warm and cozy.

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. And it will stop a bullet up to .38 caliber.

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

BERNARD

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

QUINTIN

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

SCOTT

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

QUINTIN

We're working on it.

Tim 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.

TIM

Sorry.

Quintin pulls off one of the pom-poms and looks at a GROUP OF ELVES working across the way. He lobs 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.

SCOTT

My god, are they...

QUINTIN

Don't worry. They'll wake up in the morning. They'll feel great. They won't remember a thing. Use 'em in the event that someone spots 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 work load. The new sleigh weighs a lot more than the unprotected model. We figure if they can achieve vertical take-off and landing it'll save a lot of wear and tear. Look.

Quintin nods to Larry, at the table. Larry throws a switch and puts on a pair of goggles.

LARRY

Here. You better wear these.

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

QUINTIN

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.

LARRY

We should have the bugs out by Christmas Eve.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE SITUATION ROOM - EARLY EVENING  
(CHRISTMAS EVE)

Detective Nunzio is briefing his S.W.A.T FORCE.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO

That's it, then. We'll cordon off a three block radius around Doctor Miller's house. Unit A will be posted on the roof. Calvin is to be apprehended unharmed. He'll probably be dressed like Santa Claus, so check every Santa you see.

(beat)

Well. That's it, gentlemen.  
Merry Christmas.

The force disperses.

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

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

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Santa is addressing the Elves.

SANTA

Before I leave, I just want to say that the past year has meant a lot to Tim and myself.

APPLAUSE.

SANTA (CONT'D)

I know you've all done your best. 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.



APPLAUSE.

SANTA (CONT'D)

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 have a great Christmas  
Eve!

The elves pat him on the back and give him  
encouragement as Santa, Tim and Bernard pass through  
the crowd.

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.

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, Tim 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...

TIM  
(upset)  
I wanna go, too! I went last  
year. I wanna go.

SANTA  
Come on, Sport, Quintin  
explained it to us. We have to  
keep the weight down. Besides,  
it might be too dangerous this  
year.

TIM  
(pouting)  
I wanna go.

Tim runs back to the WORKSHOP, still upset.

BERNARD  
He'll be okay.

SANTA  
I know.  
(beat)  
How 'bout me?

BERNARD  
You'll be great.

SANTA  
I'm a little nervous.

BERNARD  
That's only natural.

Santa gets down on his knees and gives Bernard a  
hug. It's a peaceful, less nervous moment.  
Suddenly, there's the sound of a LOUD ALARM.

(MORE)

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 and Santa 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.

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 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.

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. CONTROL CENTRAL - NIGHT

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

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.

SANTA (OVER)

Hey, put Tim on... I wanna tell  
 him something.

INTERCUT:

THE SLEIGH

QUINTIN (OVER)

Uh... he's still a bit upset...

SANTA

Where is he?

Tim pops up from behind the bag of toys.

TIM  
(joyfully)  
Here I am. Hiya, Dad!

SANTA  
Why you little...

QUINTIN (OVER)  
What's going on there?

SANTA  
Seems like I'm gonna have some  
company this trip. We've got a  
stowaway.

QUINTIN (OVER)  
Tim? He's there with you?

SANTA  
Ho, ho, ho! I suppose I could  
use the help. It'll be okay.

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 air space 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...

(MORE)

CONTROLLER (CONT'D)  
 (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.

EXT. THE STREET BY NEAL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A MAN DRESSED LIKE SANTA is walking down the street  
 carrying a large bag. Suddenly, FIVE S.W.A.T. TEAM  
 MEMBERS converge on him. They hold him at gun-point.

S.W.A.T. ONE  
 Freeze! Don't give me a reason.

The man drops his bag and raises his arms in the  
 air.

One of the squad members cautiously approaches the  
 Santa, while the others remain poised to fire.

SANTA MAN  
 I... I have receipts for all  
 this stuff--

S.W.A.T. ONE  
 (sternly)  
 Save it, Saint Nick! Now put  
 your hands up on that car and  
 spread 'em.

Santa complies. He's searched. The officer finds a  
 wallet and takes out a driver's license. He reads  
 it.



S.W.A.T TWO  
 What're you doing out here  
 dressed like Santa, Mr.  
 Rutledge?

RUTLEDGE  
 (a bit confused)  
 I... well, it's Christmas...

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 some of  
these apples?

PETE  
Sure! They're for the reindeer.

SANTA  
Great. They love 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:

INT. POLICE LINE-UP ROOM - NIGHT

Seven Santas, of varying heights, are in the line-up. Laura is behind a glass partition looking at them.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO  
 Take your time.

LAURA  
 I don't know... no... he's not  
 there.

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  
(points gun  
at Santa)  
Do you know what this is?

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. 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.

SANTA  
You don't have to. I was just  
going.

MAN  
The only place you're going is  
to jail.

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

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. The man and Santa both  
freeze. Santa puts out his hand and slowly opens  
it. Inside, is a .44 bullet. The man is stunned.  
Santa reaches for a pom-pom with his other hand and  
lobs it. In the ensuing 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.

SANTA

Not quite. I have one more  
stop.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The sleigh is parked on the other side of the roof, out of sight. Santa is about to descend the chimney.

VOICE (OVER)

(harshly)

Freeze!

Santa turns and sees four S.W.A.T. OFFICERS who have him surrounded.

SANTA

Merry Christmas, fellas.

OFFICER ONE

Not for you, buddy. Now, nice  
and easy... put your hands up  
against the chimney and spread  
'em.

Santa reaches for a pom-pom but is stopped by an officer who grabs Santa. In the struggle, Santa's hat falls off. Finally, The officer gets Santa by the arms and handcuffs him.

OFFICER TWO

Got him!

OFFICER ONE

(in walkie-talkie)

We're bringing him down. Hold  
your fire.

INT. NEAL AND LAURA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Santa is ushered in, still in handcuffs.

OFFICER ONE

Have a seat, Santa.

He pushes Santa to the couch. Neal and Laura enter.

SANTA

Neal. Laura. You should be  
asleep.

LAURA

Where's my baby?

SANTA

Don't you even want to know what  
I brought you for Christmas?

The front door opens. AN OFFICER enters with Tim.

LAURA

Tim!

TIM

(running to  
Santa)

Let him go! Let him go!

He runs to Santa and hugs him.

Santa whispers quietly in Tim's ear.

SANTA

Get to the sleigh. Find my hat.  
Contact Quintin. Tell him to  
deploy E.L.F.S.

Laura comes to them and takes Tim away.

LAURA

Honey, I was so worried. Where  
have you been?

TIM  
You gotta let him go, Mom. He's  
gotta get back.

NEAL  
Back where?

TIM  
The North Pole.

OFFICER ONE  
We'll take him into custody now.

The officers escort Santa out.

LAURA  
Tim, let me look at you. You've  
been gone almost a year. Tell  
us. Tell us where you've been.  
Where did he take you?

NEAL  
Easy, Laura. Let the boy  
collect his thoughts.  
(beat)  
Come here, Tim.

Tim complies. He stands right in front of Neal who  
sits on the couch.

NEAL (CONT'D)  
Did you have a good time?

TIM  
You bet.

NEAL  
You were up at the North Pole?

TIM  
Uh-huh.

NEAL  
Lotta elves up there, I bet.

TIM  
'Bout a thousand.

NEAL  
Let me ask you this. How'd you  
and your dad get here tonight?



Tim thinks about how to answer for a minute.

TIM  
Let me ask you this. How does  
this feel?

Tim gives Neal a quick kick in the shin and runs out  
the door. In an instant... he's gone.

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

QUINTIN  
What the hell's going on?  
Where's Santa?

ELF  
He's down at the Miller's.

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

CUT TO:

EXT. NEAL'S ROOF - NIGHT

CLOSE ON:

Santa's hat, with the small voice of Quintin coming  
out of it.

QUINTIN (OVER)  
Now. Get out of there now...

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Detective Nunzio is grilling Santa.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO  
Alright, let's go through it  
again, Calvin. What's your  
name?

SANTA  
Santa Claus.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO  
And where--

SANTA

I was born in Chicago, but I now reside on the North Pole. I don't have a phone... but you can write me. "Santa Claus, North Pole"... it'll get to me.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO

Think you're pretty cute, huh?

SANTA

I have my days.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO

You think you're helping your kid with all this nonsense?

SANTA

He was up there with me... he knows it's not nonsense.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO

Well, I hate to be the Grinch who stole Christmas, but I'm gonna lock you up. Maybe a couple of weeks in the slammer will make you a more cooperative prisoner.

SANTA

I appreciate your hospitality, but I'm afraid I'm going to have to be leaving you soon.

Nunzio opens the door and shouts down the hall.

DETECTIVE NUNZIO

Someone get in here and lock this clown up!

EXT. NEAL'S ROOF - NIGHT

The reindeer are getting restless. The top of a ladder is suddenly visible. Tim climbs to the roof. He goes to the sleigh and looks in. He looks around the roof and sees Santa's hat. He picks it up and puts it on.

QUINTIN (OVER)

Damnit, where the hell is he?

TIM  
 Quintin?

QUINTIN (OVER)  
 Who is that-- Tim?

TIM  
 Yeah.

CONTROL CENTRAL

QUINTIN  
 Where's Santa?

TIM (OVER)  
 The police got him. He's all  
 tied up. He wants you to ploy  
 Elfs. What's that mean?

QUINTIN  
 Hang in there, Tim. You wait  
 where you are.  
 (to Bernard)  
 Alright, Bernard, let's see how  
 good your security is.  
 (dramatic beat)  
 Deploy E.L.F.S.!

Bernard sounds a LOUD ALARM. A GROUP OF FIVE ELVES  
 emerge from a back room. Over the door of the room  
 is a sign that reads: "Effective Liberating Force  
 Squad." The first letters spelling out: "E.L.F.S."

BERNARD  
 (to E.L.F.S.)  
 Alright boys... you're on.

And in a flash... they're gone.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

It's quiet. The DESK SERGEANT sits up high behind  
 the counter. The front door opens... then closes as  
 if by itself. The sergeant looks up and sees no  
 one.

E.L.F.S. ONE (OVER)  
 We're looking for Santa Claus.  
 Is he here?

The sergeant looks down in front of the desk.  
 Standing there is the E.L.F.S.

DESK SERGEANT  
Go home, kids. Visiting hours  
are over.

E.L.F.S. ONE  
We're not kids... and we're not  
visiting.

The Elves head towards the back.

DESK SERGEANT  
Hey! You can't go back there.

E.L.F.S. ONE  
Yeah? Who's gonna stop us?

DESK SERGEANT  
Alright, game's over. Out you  
go.

The sergeant goes to grab one of the Elves. The  
Elves each take a pom-pom and lob them at the Sarge.  
When the smoke clears, the Sergeant is out cold and  
the E.L.F.S. are gone.

EXT. NEAL'S ROOF

Tim is sitting against the chimney huddled up  
against the cold night air. Santa and the E.L.F.S.  
appear.

SANTA  
Hey, Sport.

TIM  
Dad!

They embrace. Tim notices the E.L.F.S.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Who're they?

SANTA  
They came to help.  
(to E.L.F.S.)  
You did good work, men.

E.L.F.S. ONE  
Wish you could come back with  
us.

SANTA  
Someone's gotta bring back the sleigh.

E.L.F.S. ONE  
Well... see you up north, Sir.

And then, they're gone.

TIM  
Let's go, Dad, I'm freezing.

SANTA  
Come here, Sport.

Tim goes to his father.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
Let's go inside and talk to your mom and Neal.

TIM  
Can I go down the chimney with you.

Santa looks and sees the ladder on the side of the house.

SANTA  
We better take the rose suchak ladder.

Tim laughs.

INT. NEAL'S LIVING ROOM

Santa and Tim enter. Neal is on the couch. Laura is pacing.

LAURA  
Tim!

She runs to him.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
Don't run off like that again.

TIM  
Sorry.

Neal and Laura look at Santa.

LAURA  
I thought the police had you.

NEAL  
They let you go?

TIM  
Nuh-uh. The elves helped him.

Neal and Laura look at each other.

SANTA  
Look, I don't have much time.  
They'll be coming after me  
again. I'm sorry if I worried  
you. Tim's fine. He's a good  
boy.

NEAL  
Scott. Let's talk about the way  
you're dressed. Do you really  
think--

SANTA  
Not now, Doc. I am who I am.  
I'm happy this way. Tim knows.

TIM  
You bet.

SANTA  
The thing is... I don't think  
Tim should come back with me.

TIM  
Dad!

SANTA  
Come here, Sport.  
(Tim does)  
It's no life for you up there.  
Now that Bernard and Quintin  
have things worked out, I'll be  
real busy getting ready for next  
year. I won't have time to look  
after you properly.

Santa looks at Neal and Laura.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
They will. Mom loves you and  
Neal... well he's okay, too.  
You'll be much better off here.

TIM  
(through his  
tears)  
But I wanna be with you.

SANTA  
I know, Sport. I wanna be with  
you, too. But we both know  
you'd be better off here.

TIM  
What about Christmas. I was a  
big help to you tonight. You  
need me. You really do.

SANTA  
Hey, Sport. You think I'd try  
to do this next year without  
you?

TIM  
You mean it?

SANTA  
You be good this year and come  
next Christmas you'll be riding  
shotgun... just like tonight.

TIM  
Alright!

Tim and Santa hug each other.

TIM (CONT'D)  
(softly, in Santa's  
ear)  
I love you, Dad.

SANTA  
I love you, too, Sport.

Santa turns to Laura.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
Laura. All I ask is that I can  
have Tim Thanksgiving to  
Christmas Eve. What'd you say?

LAURA

You really expect me to give custody to a man who thinks he's Santa Claus?

SANTA

Don't be so naughty. Think about it. I'll have my attorney, Bernard, send you the paper work. I guarantee, none of this will mean anything to you tomorrow.

LAURA

You expect me to forget about all this?

SANTA

You bet.

With that, he pulls off one of his pom-poms and lobs it toward the couch. When the smoke clears, he's gone.

EXT. NEAL'S ROOF - NIGHT

Santa finds his hat and gets in the sleigh.

SANTA

Santa calling Quintin... Santa calling--

QUINTIN (OVER)

Well, where the hell have you been?

SANTA

Jail.

QUINTIN (OVER)

Everything okay?

SANTA

Yup.

Santa jingles the reins and the sleigh takes off.

INT. CONTROL CENTRAL- NIGHT

SANTA (OVER)

Hey, is Bernard there?... put him on.



BERNARD

Right here, Boss.

SANTA (OVER)

The E.L.F.S. turned out to be a crackerjack squad.

BERNARD

Glad to hear it. I'll tell them.

SANTA (OVER)

Listen, Bernard. I need you to draft a letter to my wife for custody of Tim next Thanksgiving. Think you can handle it?

BERNARD

Piece of cake.  
(beat, then  
saddly)  
Then he's not coming back with you?

SANTA (OVER)

We'll see him next year... and every year. Heck, when I get too old for the job we'll let him take over!

BERNARD

I'll put that in the "Santa Clause."

SANTA (OVER)

Well. I'm heading in. See you in the morning. Santa out.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONTROL CENTRAL - 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 another lollipop.

SFX: A LOUD ALARM.

BERNARD

My god, what's that?

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

F-15's. Still in pursuit.  
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  
descent. 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  
descent. 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 'round. 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.

Larry approaches.

LARRY

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  
One of the reindeer's been  
hit... 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 won't 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.

ELF  
Oh my god...

BERNARD  
No.

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

The STATIC continues.

BERNARD  
Damn it, 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.

LARRY  
I'm going outside.

Larry begins to leave.

BERNARD  
Wait. I'll come with you.

Bernard follows Larry 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 TUMULTUOUS CHEER RINGS OUT.

VOICE  
(joyous)  
It's them!

Bernard looks at Larry. They jump up and down and hug.

BERNARD  
Hey! I never had any doubt!

Quintin is seen in the background.

BERNARD (CONT'D)  
Quintin! You old wizard, you!  
Come here.

Bernard 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.



LARRY

That was great! 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, 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 two.

SANTA

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

They 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 couch They stir.

NEAL  
(groggy)  
You ok?

LAURA  
Huh?

NEAL  
What happened?

LAURA  
I... I don't know. I fell asleep.

NEAL  
I could have sworn that he would show. I really thought he--

Laura looks and sees Tim asleep on the floor next to the tree. She runs to him.

LAURA  
Tim? Tim!

Tim wakes up.

TIM  
Mom!

They hug.

LAURA  
Tim, are you okay?

TIM  
Yeah, great.

LAURA  
Where have you been... how did you get here?

TIM

Dad brought me.

NEAL

I knew he'd come on Christmas  
Eve!

Tim notices all the presents under the tree.

TIM

Alright! Presents!

He starts ripping them open.

Neal notices something under the tree.

LAURA

What?

NEAL

Look.

THEIR POV

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

BACK TO SCENE

Tim wakes up. He gives his mom a hug. Neal gets  
the two presents.

NEAL

(to Tim)

Did you put those there?

TIM

Nuh-uh.

Laura and Neal take 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 piece 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."

BACK TO SCENE

Neal and Laura look at each other as Tim laughs.

FINAL FADE: