

TOYZ ON DEMAND!

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SANTA'S CASTLE (NORTH POLE) - DAY

A bright warm sunny day. Everywhere, ice glistens as it melts.

A snow covered driveway stretches from ornate iron gates with "NORTH POLE" wrought in the archway to the enormous wooden front door of Santa's Castle.

The castle front door— a little "cat door" cut into it— opens and the elderly and arthritic MRS. CLAUS steps out and pours milk in a cat's bowl resting on the ground. The name "STRUDEL" is glazed onto the bowl in large letters.

STRUDEL, a cute kitten, rubs himself against Mrs. Claus' leg. Mrs. Claus straightens herself with great effort. Strudel approaches his bowl. A big drop of water lands in the bowl, making a SPLASH.

STRUDEL
(annoyed)
Meow!

Hanging from the castle eve directly above Strudel is a giant icicle. It glistens as water runs down it and drips.

A mighty CRACKING SOUND is heard and Strudel looks up.

The icicle breaks off from the eve.

Strudel's hair puffs out in sheer terror.

The icicle hurtles toward the ground.

Strudel frozen with fear watches it come straight at him.

Strudel SHRIEKS as the icicle impales him.

Mrs. Claus looks down at the bloody mess at her feet, a pile of red stained fur from which a giant sword-like icicle sticking straight up rises over her head.

MRS. CLAUS
That does it!
(yelling, hands on hips)
Nicholas fucking Claus we're
moving!

The sound of Mrs. Claus' voice makes the other icicles on the eve tremble and fall. Landing in front of Mrs. Claus' toes they spread left and right forming an icy picket fence.

Mrs. Claus parts two icicles with her hands, and the rest fall like dominoes in each direction, CRASHING into pieces as she storms into the castle through the front door.

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - DAY

The workshop is a hive of activity, humming with MECHANICAL NOISE. An old industrial space updated to serve modern needs with modern machinery that seems too big. Pipes, wires, ducting and lights are jerry-rigged to old beams.

A large digital clock hangs under a sign, "Countdown to Christmas", blinks 157 Days 12 Hours 8 Mins and 25 seconds.

ELVES are busy assembling an arsenal of toys on conveyor belts; miniature AK 47s in yellow plastic, rocket propelled grenade launchers in purple; tanks and planes in vibrant colors.

SANTA, in overalls, a hard hat on top of his usual red one, stands near an overhead sign warning "hard hat zone" and the words "Plastic Extrusion". Elves operate machines squirting liquid plastic from tubes into brightly colored molds.

An angry MRS. CLAUS, without a hard hat, confronts Santa who tries to remain calm in front of his employees.

The Elves do their best to look busy but have a pointy ear turned toward the argument.

SANTA

Look, Hilda, the Pole's been here for 50 million years. So what if it melts a little? There'll still be plenty left.

MRS. CLAUS

You're in denial like the rest of 'em. Your goddamn existence is at stake but it's business as usual.

SANTA

Relocate overnight? Come on.

MRS. CLAUS

And forget the South Pole. I'm not taking my old Dutch behind anywhere cold. My arthritis is killing me. I'm tired. I've had it.

Behind Santa the floor under the plastic extrusion area begins to bulge upward. Cracks appear and radiate outward as RUMBLING and CRUNCHING sounds are heard. Overhead lights swing. Boxes fall from nearby shelves.

A submarine periscope protrudes through the floor of workshop, directly beneath BICKLES an elf working a plastics hose.

The periscope quickly rises up between Bickles' legs, punching him in the crotch.

BICKLES

Ouch!

The periscope continues to extend, lifting Bickles clean off the floor. The periscope rotates, swinging Bickles around with it, like he's on a swiveling stool. The hose he's operating winds around him like a boa constrictor.

When the "eye" of the periscope faces directly at Mrs. Claus a SUBMARINE BEEPING SOUND is heard, the Russian word for "DIVE" is heard coming out of the periscope.

The periscope rapidly lowers. Bickles falls. Rapidly unrolled from the hose, he spins like a top, until dumped on the cracked floor, writhing and holding his groin.

MRS. CLAUS

You're on very thin ice, Nicholas Claus.

Mrs. Claus turns and addresses the Elves.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

And that goes for the lot of you!

Santa watches silently as Mrs. Claus walks out, hand on hip, continuing her rant.

MRS CLAUS (CONT.)

Sell this shit for a boatload of money. Ship all our crap to the Sunbelt! But who listens to me? Men!

Santa blinks.

EXT. REINDEER STABLES - DAY

JASPER, the head elf, and BICKLES, another elf, walk along an icy path toward the reindeer stables, a small building made of stone and wood, with one side open. Both carry two buckets of reindeer feed, one in each hand.

Bickles pants are patched from the crotch in front to the seat at back. He walks with a round gait, still sore from the morning's submarine periscope incident.

BICKLES

What gets me— and y'know, I ain't askin' for flowers and a get well card— is that he doesn't give a rat's ass.

JASPER

Well, he's a busy guy, Bickles.

BICKLES

Too busy to say, "Gee Bickles, you all right? Anything I can do?"

(spits)

I mean, shit. I practically lost my elfhood today!

Jasper is just about to say something when there's a loud "CRACK". Followed by "CH-CH-CH-CH-CH..."

Bickles and Jasper see the ice cracking directly down the path toward them.

The crack runs right between the two of them.

The ice under them wobbles. They look at each other horrified.

Jasper balances himself using the buckets of reindeer feed like a tightrope walker uses a pole, a little feed spilling while he does this.

Bickles isn't nimble enough. The ice under Bickles flips up and he slides into the freezing water, SCREAMING.

Jasper gets down on his belly and extends his arm out to Bickles who grasps it.

Jasper pulls Bickles out of the water. Bickles is shivering and blue.

BICKLES (CONT'D)

(teeth chattering)

First my nuts get pulverized. Now they're frozen off!

Jasper looks around. The landscape has suddenly changed. The ice has broken in a rough circle.

They are on an island with the stables at the center surrounded by a moat.

Reindeer wander over from the stable, blinking and confused, then nibble the spilled feed.

Jasper unclips a leather pouch on his belt, and pulls out a twisted shell- like a miniature cornucopia.

He grabs a nearby reindeer by the neck and holds it in a headlock.

With the reindeer under his elbow Jasper deftly puts the wide end of the shell into his pouch, scooping out a small mound of sparkling white powder. He then sticks the wide end of the shell with the powder on it up the reindeer's nostril. He bends over and blows a hard puff through the narrow end of the shell, sending the powder up the reindeer's nose.

The reindeer WHINNIES, pricks its ears, rolls its eyes backward and convulses momentarily, then STAMPS its hooves.

As the reindeer stamps it slowly starts to levitate, rising a few inches from the ice.

Jasper grabs Bickles and throws him over the back of the hovering reindeer.

Jasper then grabs another reindeer, puts it in a headlock.

We see Bickles on his reindeer hovering higher.

Jasper floats up on the other reindeer and takes Bickles' reindeer by an antler, then guides them airborne towards Santa's Castle.

The reindeers' noses glow red.

FADE OUT.

INT. OUTSIDE SANTA'S STUDY - DAY

JASPER stands outside the large wooden door. He hears SANTA and MRS. CLAUS arguing loudly.

MRS. CLAUS (O.S.)
You're not gambling away my
retirement! I can't take this cold
anymore. My arthritis is killing
me.

SANTA (O.S.)
Hilda, Hilda, Hilda, listen...

MRS. CLAUS (O.S.)
Don't Hilda me, Nicholas Claus. I'm
serious. You have to sell the
business. Now! While it's still
worth something!

Jasper is about to knock. His fist comes close to the door but stops short. Instead, he peeps in through the keyhole.

INT. SANTA'S STUDY (THROUGH KEYHOLE) - DAY

THE KEYHOLE FRAMES THE SHOT

We see the walls of the office lined with pictures of Santa with famous people. From 1920's aviators, Hollywood stars of the golden years, 70's and 80's rock stars to 21st century celebrities.

Behind Santa's desk is a large poster for the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular, and on his desk, is a picture of Santa with two Rockettes perched on his knees.

Seated at his desk, SANTA pours himself a drink. MRS. CLAUS stands in front of the desk, hands on hips.

SANTA

Sell the business? Who's going to buy it? I don't make any money from the toys? I give them away, for Chrissakes.

Santa takes a sip.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Toys are a loss leader. I make my money from appearances, Hilda. And have for a long time. You know that - Father Christmas!

MRS. CLAUS

I have no idea where the money comes from but I sure as hell know where it goes! When it's time to settle all your gambling debts, those lousy sharks call me! From Mumbai to Melbourne, wherever there's horse race...

SANTA

I win too, y'know.

MRS. CLAUS

Well, they don't call me about that. And neither do you. I'm stuck here in this damn cold ass dump while you get to gallivant and globe trot!

She waves at the pictures on the walls.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)
Appearances, huh! Who ever sees us
together? When was the last time we
went out to dinner? When?

SANTA
(mumbles)

MRS. CLAUS
1966! That's when!

SANTA
Really? I don't remember.

MRS. CLAUS
We go out to dinner once in 50
years and you don't even remember
it? Oh my dear God!

Mrs. Claus puts both hands to her head in dismay.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)
What is the point?

SANTA
I'll get Jasper to hook up the
reindeer; we can fly to Paris
tonight.

MRS. CLAUS
Screw Paris! I don't want to go out
tonight. I want out permanently!
I'm putting the Castle on the
market.

SANTA
You can't do that... I have the
workshop...

MRS. CLAUS
The deed's in my name. Remember? In
case the sleigh crashes, remember?

Mrs. Claus turns and walks toward the door.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)
You would if you didn't drink so
god damn much!

INT. OUTSIDE SANTA'S STUDY - DAY

JASPER quickly straightens up. MRS. CLAUS opens the door and
passes by him.

MRS. CLAUS
Don't waste your time, Jasper.

INT. SANTA'S STUDY DAY

SANTA is pouring himself another drink as JASPER approaches.

JASPER
About the reindeer stables, boss.

SANTA
Jasper, before you start.

Santa picks up an ornate silver ice bucket from the floor by his desk and proffers it to Jasper.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Do me a favor and get me a little more ice.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELVES DINING HALL - NIGHT

A typical cafeteria-style dining room, busy ELVES buss their trays of self-served food to long, narrow communal tables. Around one table, a group of elves— JASPER, ELTARK, ZORPE and BENJY— chow down and chew the fat.

ELTARK
She's got him by the balls.

BENJY
But the old cow is right. This is a sinking ship.
(beat)
Poor Bickles.

All Elves shake their heads in agreement.

ZORPE
(mouth half full)
Where does that leave us?

ELTARK
Jasper, what do you think they're going to do?

JASPER
Beats me.

EXT. TOYZ ON DEMAND! HQ - DAY

An impossibly tall skyscraper stretches from the sidewalk up to the clouds. Its top crested by the Toyz On Demand logo, a garishly colored assemblage of letters designed to look haphazard, the way a child would stack blocks.

INT. TOYZ ON DEMAND! HQ/BOARDROOM - DAY

The boardroom walls are hung with large Andy Warhol-style portraits of toy guns and tanks, spinning tops and dolls.

The senior EXECUTIVES of Toyz On Demand, an earnest suit-clad group, mostly men of advanced middle age and a few women, sit in gleaming modern chairs around a long, dark black lacquer table.

LARRY HAVESACK, CEO, stands, silhouetted against the window, at head of the table holding a laser pointer.

LARRY

Right now, parents have other concerns.

Larry bangs his fist on the table.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Spending on toys is in the toilet!

Larry flashes his laser pointer at chart showing a red line headed downward on flat screen TV on the wall opposite him.

LARRY (CONT'D)

I've never seen it so bad. How about you Claiborne?

Larry glances at CLAIBORNE ARCHER III, the chief financial officer.

CLAIBORNE

(shakes head)

Never.

LARRY

But kids know what kids want. Toys!

(beat)

And kids know technology better than anyone.

(beat)

Aren't we the world's largest Internet toy company? Hello?

He reaches into his pants pocket and pulls out a children's toy, a brightly colored spinning top.

LARRY (CONT'D)
I want some creative thinking here,
folks.

He puts on the top on the boardroom table and sends it spinning.

The group of executives gaze mutely at the top as it wanders erratically, passing by each one of them randomly.

LARRY (CONT'D)
What we need is a way to get
parents out of the equation.
(beat)
We've got to get directly to the
littlest end users!

The spinning top runs down then skitters off the table.

INT. CASTLE TURRET - DAY (DUSK)

JASPER sits on a short stool carving a cubic block of wood with a small sharp knife. Nearby, MRS. CLAUS looks out the window at the multi-colored glow of the Aurora Borealis flickering and dancing across the sky.

MRS. CLAUS
Ah, they're coming!

ZOOM into the Aurora Borealis to see a small cloud passing through it.

EXT. AURORA BOREALIS - DAY (DUSK)

We see the cloud is actually a swarm of moths fluttering and floating through the sparkling lights.

As the moths fly through the Aurora Borealis their wings pick up some of the sparkle, like glitter at a dance party.

The swarm of moths turns and heads towards the castle turret.

INT. CASTLE TURRET - DAY (DUSK)

MRS. CLAUS
Quick Jasper!

MRS. CLAUS turns from the window, grabs a bowl marked "sugar" from a small table nearby and hurriedly pours the entire contents into a large watering can then stirs it with a wooden spoon.

JASPER pockets the wooden block, sheathes the knife in his boot and grabs a stack of long shallow metal troughs from the table and lays them on every flat surface in the turret – the shelves, a table, an old desk in the corner, a small wooden bench and the floor.

Mrs. Claus trails Jasper, pouring sugar water from the watering can into the troughs.

The swarm of moths flies in through the open window, turning the room into a swirling mass of luminescence.

The chaos settles, we see thousands of moths perched on the rims of the troughs; their gray wings, covered with sparkling white dust.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

So pretty.

(sighs)

There's no time to waste.

From a rack on the wall, Mrs. Claus and Jasper grab and tie on a short leather aprons with a large pocket in the front. Next to the pocket in a holder sits a shaving brush.

They set to work, delicately brushing each moth, gathering up the sparkling white powder then shaking it into the apron pocket.

Time passes.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

A good haul, Jasper. Enough here to fly all the reindeer twice around the world.

Jasper takes out his pouch and shell. Using the shell he scoops some of the sparkling dust out of his apron and into the pouch. He squeezes the pouch.

JASPER

(a little doubtful)

Yeah, maybe, Mrs. C.

The two go back to work, dusting away.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Ah, um, Mrs. C, um, are you really going to sell the castle?

MRS. CLAUS

Well, Jasper, I'm glad you asked. I need your help to put it on the Internet. I'm not very good with computers.

JASPER

Gee, Mrs. C. I don't know...
Selling the castle's a big deal.

MRS. CLAUS

Nonsense. Point me in the right direction and I'll do the rest.
Don't worry, I'll cope—even with my arthritic fingers.

INT. TOYZ ON DEMAND! HQ/CEO'S OFFICE - DAY

The office has a commanding view over the city below.

LARRY lines up a putt into a green plastic practice golf hole, complete with miniature flag. Numerous golf balls surround the hole. CLAIBORNE in agitated work mode stands at the door, watching.

CLAIBORNE

It's a major disincentive.

Larry putts. And misses.

CLAIBORNE (CONT'D)

Every toy Santa delivers is one less toy being bought. Think of it, Larry.

Larry lines up another putt.

CLAIBORNE (CONT'D)

The fat old sack's freebies are eating into our bottom line. He's not really in the toy business. Toys are a write-off for him. His bread and butter is endorsements and promotion.

Larry pauses and looks up from his putt.

LARRY

Your point is?

CLAIBORNE

If we could sell those same toys that he gives away, that would fill the hole in our revenue.

Larry completes his stroke, the ball goes in the hole, the little flag waves and a recording of a CROWD CHEERING plays. Larry looks at Claiborne. They chuckle.

LARRY

And I suppose you have a suggestion
on how we can get our hands on
those toys?

CLAIBORNE

Look at this.

Claiborne pulls his phone out of his jacket packet and shows the screen to Larry.

CUT TO:

XCU of phone screen: We see Santa's Castle with a big "For Sale" sign splashed across it.

INT. SANTA'S STUDY - DAY

SANTA paces about the study red in the face, fuming. MRS CLAUS sits in a chair in front of Santa's desk, calmly knitting.

SANTA

I can't believe you'd do a thing
like that!

MRS. CLAUS

So easy. I found a real estate web
site specializing in castles.

SANTA

But there's so much to consider.

MRS. CLAUS

Bullshit. I may be the one with a
bum hip, but you're stuck. Stuck in
the past. Besides, we've already
had an offer.

Santa stops pacing, circles slowly back behind his desk and sits facing Mrs. Claus.

SANTA

What kind of offer?

Mrs. Claus rests her reading glasses on the tip of her nose, reaches into her fanny pack and pulls out her phone—a senior citizen special with huge, easy-to-read numbers.

Peering at the phone at arms length she taps voicemail and the speaker button.

LARRY (VO)
(speaker phone voice)
Hello! Larry Havesack, CEO of Toyz
On Demand! in New York. We'd like
to buy your Castle. Looks lovely.
Just great. Awesome. And... ah,
actually, we'd like to make you an
offer on your business, too. The
whole sheebang. Call me back,
anytime...

Mrs. Claus taps the button again. Santa drums his fingers on his desk. The two stare at each other.

A few beats.

MRS. CLAUS
Well?

Santa gets up and walks to the window, leans on the windowsill and stares out at the empty wintry landscape.

SANTA
(quietly seething)
You always figure out how to get
your way, don't you?

Santa draws a deep breath.

SANTA (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Jasper!!

INT. REINDEER STABLES - DAY

Several sleighs are parked in the stables. A group of elves, including ELTARK, BENJY and ZORPE prepare a sleigh for a trip.

Benjy cleans the front of the sleigh, Eltark, underneath, checks the runners. Nearby, Zorpe sorts through a basket containing reindeer harnesses.

ELTARK
My vote is for Rio. (Starts
singing) "When my baby, when my
baby smiles at me I go to Rio..."

BENJY

Can't see Mrs. Claus letting the
old boy loose in Brazil. Can you
imagine?

ZORPE

Sydney has a great Mardi Gras.
Maybe we can go there?

BENJY

Do you think they'll get another
castle like this one? How many warm
weather places have castles?

JASPER approaches over a brightly colored inflatable pontoon
(usually seen in backyard swimming pools) that now connects
the stables to the rest of the castle grounds.

ELTARK

Jasper, what's it gonna be? Where's
the boss going to relocate us?

JASPER

How should I know?

BENJY

Mrs. C didn't say?

JASPER

It's not a done deal. That's why
the big guy is going to New York.
Negotiations. When's the sleigh
gonna be ready? He's on my ass.

ZORPE

New York, huh, Jasper?

Eltark pokes his head out from under the sleigh.

ELTARK

Can we come, too?

JASPER

Trust me. Traveling with the boss
isn't all that's it's cracked up to
be.

EXT. SANTA'S CASTLE - DAY

MRS. CLAUS looks at Strudel's bowl on the ground next to the
open front door, next to a little red patch of ice. With some
difficulty she picks it up and takes it takes it inside.

INT. SANTA'S CASTLE - DAY

MRS. CLAUS walks down a long corridor and through a large room, so many objects, souvenirs, relics, old toys etc. have accumulated on shelves the clutter feels oppressive.

INT. SANTA'S CASTLE/ KITCHEN - DAY

Mrs. Claus steps on the foot pedal of the trash can, the lid opens and she tosses Strudel's bowl in.

She looks around. The kitchen is full of hanging pots and pans and clutter, too.

MRS. CLAUS

(sighs)

If only packing up the rest of this
shit was as easy. I should throw
the whole lot out.

EXT. SANTA'S SLEIGH (MID AIR) - DAY (DUSK)

SANTA holds the reins as the reindeer pull the sleigh across the sky. JASPER sits beside him, eyeing navigation instruments on the sleigh's dashboard indicating the direction to New York.

Embedded in the sleigh frame are ornate cup holders. Jasper's has a beer in it, Santa's has a bottle of whiskey.

SANTA

Bean counters. Legal bamboozlers.
Corporate mouthpieces. That's New
York, Jasper.

JASPER

(not paying attention)

Yeah?

SANTA

Been going there for over a hundred
years. First it was greeting card
portraits; then department stores;
then radio, and all that "Ho, ho,
ho-ing" into microphones.

JASPER

Sounds exhausting, boss.

SANTA

Then that stupid Miracle movie.
Like a snowball from hell: It's
been non-fucking stop ever since.
They can have it.

JASPER
I like the city.

Santa lifts the whiskey bottle from his cup holder, looks at Jasper and takes a swig.

SANTA
If I didn't go down there every
summer and throw my weight around
those lousy bastards would screw me
blind. Can't trust 'em.

JASPER
(Hint of sarcasm)
I thought you loved annual rituals?
Besides it gets Mrs. Claus off your
back for two weeks straight.

Jasper takes a pull on his beer.

SANTA
(wistfully)
Yeah. Ever since the Pole started
melting she's been a royal pain in
the ass.

Jasper nods.

SANTA (CONT'D)
You can't turn the clock back,
Jasper. But you'd like to think
you'd do it all over again. Just
the same. That you got it right the
first time. But I don't know...
(a few beats)
Later in life you can't help but
wonder, "what if?" What if I'd
taken a turn down a different road.
Married a different woman...
(beat)
Shit... it hurts to think that way.
Brings up a lot of pain.

Santa sips his whiskey. Jasper fidgets. Santa isn't expecting a response.

SANTA (CONT'D)
We've had ups and downs before. But
this is the worst. Nothing makes
her happy. I can't win.

JASPER

Will selling the castle make her happy?

SANTA

I have no fucking idea, Jasper. Women! I hate to admit, but she's right. Things have to change. This Toyz On Demand offer is a now or never situation. But it's hard to adapt when you're old.

JASPER

Some of the fellas were wondering what's gonna happen to us elves?

SANTA

(gruffly)

Don't worry about that. You'll be fine.

INT. CASTLE TURRET - DAY (DUSK)

MRS. CLAUS carries a dustpan and brush, and BENJY, a broom, as they enter the dark room. Dead moths are everywhere, covering the table, shelves and the floor like leaves.

Mrs. Claus brushes the moths on the table into her pan and Benjy, a little unnerved, starts sweeping the floor clean.

BENJY

Will the moths find our new place when we move, Mrs. C?

MRS. CLAUS

I don't know, Benjy. I hope not for their sake. Everyone loves a little sugar... even if it kills them.

INT. TOYZ ON DEMAND! HQ/HALLWAY - DAY

JASPER strolls down a long corridor with his hands behind his back. He stops briefly to inspect a large toy-themed artwork in a frame.

Jasper sits on a chair and takes a small wooden box from his pocket, the cube he was working on before but more advanced.

He looks up at the closed door opposite him. Its sign says "Boardroom".

He pulls a slender knife from his boot and carves on his box.

INT. TOYZ ON DEMAND! HQ/BOARDROOM - DAY

Toyz On Demand! EXECUTIVES sit around the boardroom table. SANTA, dressed casually, like a guy who runs a successful workshop -very L.L. Bean- sits next to LARRY HAVESACK who stands at the head.

LARRY

Christmas is going right back where
it belongs: Into the hands of the
littlest end-users!

Around the table heads nod in agreement.

SANTA

End users. Ho. Ho. Ho. I like it.
Little devils put an end to
everything they get their mitts on.
Usually the same friggin' day. End
users.

Larry puts his hand on Santa's shoulder and gives him a brotherly squeeze.

LARRY

This deal, co-branding Toyz On
Demand! with Santa, sends a
powerful message. In the days and
nights before Christmas, you can
bet your fanny mice'll be clicking
overtime clear across the planet.

Larry laughs at his own joke. The others laugh along, too.

LARRY (CONT'D)

No surprise. Mr. Claus brings a lot
to the table: Worldwide
recognition; a killer mailing list;
and a reputation for on-time
delivery. The right package to take
Toyz On Demand! to the top of the
tree.

The group chuckles on cue. Larry looks down and addresses Santa.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Our present to you, Santa? How
about a sack full of stock options?

SANTA

(chuckles)

Will that fit in my sleigh?

LARRY

Ladies and Gentlemen: I'm proud to announce, Santa and Toyz On Demand! More synergy than you'll find under any mistletoe.

Santa stands up and shakes Larry's hand. APPLAUSE from the group.

SANTA

Thank you. For once, I'm looking forward to some quality time with my wife around the holidays.

CIRCLE WIPE TO:

MONTAGE: Newspaper and web site headlines spin around. Headlines read: SANTA'S BIG FAT DEAL. SACK MAN BAGS BILLIONS. MERRY MERGER MAGNATES with images of Santa and Larry shaking hands.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/PRESIDENT'S SUITE - DAY

Empty bottles of champagne, wine and liquor and silver platters of half-eaten food cover the antique tables and dresser. The air is thick with cigar and pipe smoke. Lamp shades and paintings are askew. The curtains are drawn, light creeps around the edges.

SANTA in undershorts and wife-beater lies propped up by pillows on the bed, his pipe hangs from his mouth. He pours a generous tumbler of Scotch and rests it on his belly.

He reaches back, planting the Scotch bottle on the night stand where it obscures a framed picture of Mrs. Claus adjacent to the bedside lamp.

Through the brown liquid, Mrs. Claus's face distorts like a funhouse mirror.

Santa picks up his iPad. A taps through the Racing Form app. The TV remote rests beside him.

The doors of the armoire opposite the bed are open, revealing a muted TV showing horse racing at Aqueduct.

JASPER sits in an overstuffed chair carving details on a what is becoming a Jack-in-the-Box. A small plate with a piece of chicken rests on his lap.

The chicken rolls off his plate and under the bed.

Jasper puts the plate on a side table next to a bottle of beer, gets up and crawls under the bed.

Under the bed, Jasper spies a loose bedspring dangling down.

He unclips the spring and takes it. He forgets the chicken and crawls back out.

Jasper's antics fail to disturb Santa, who takes a gulp and continues looking at the racing form.

SANTA

Shit! Today's my lucky day! Jasper,
quick.

Santa rests his glass on the night stand, leans over and reaches into his boot by his bed. He pulls out a wad of cash.

He grabs his phone from the night stand and makes a call.

SANTA (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Silver Bells third race. 3 to 1
online. Can you beat that?

(beat)

Done! Five grand on Silver Bells: 7
to 2 for a win.

(to Jasper)

Hurry! Get over to Leo. Now! Don't
fuck around!

Jasper knocks back his beer, wipes his mouth, grabs the cash and rushes off, SLAMMING the door behind him.

Santa scoops up the remote and unmutes the TV.

RACETRACK NOISES up.

INT. BAUBLE BASH & BUXX OFFICE - DAY

An old loft building, cast iron pillars stretching to the twenty-foot ceilings. Everything else is the utmost latest in fashion; the furniture, the lighting, the lurid walls, the technology and especially the staff.

Seated around a curvaceous coffee table are DANA BUXX, a straight-shooting blonde, AUDREY BAUBLE, a mouthy redhead, and SAMANTHA BASH a Black woman with straightened hair and considerable charm, the sexy young women at the helm of the hottest public relations company in New York.

They glance over iPads and work their smart phones.

DANA

I told all the gossip columnists
tonight's party is a giant
publicity threeway: Big new Store;

Big new fashion line: Big new business.

SAMANTHA

Love it. This guest list is as triple A as your bra is double D, honey!

AUDREY

Bauble Bash and Buxx: Where coverage meets cleavage, honey! The three women high five each other.

DANA

Larry Havesack is going to wet himself when he grasps how much media attention we're getting for Toyz On Demand!

AUDREY

Totally. Wait till he sees the space! Neiditz-Ruckus has turned it out. Amazing. And completely hush hush. Everyone in the universe is dying for a peek.

SAMANTHA

Mad Ass Evah signed off on performing his new single. His legal people had a hissy about DJ Katalyst spinning live over the Internet. But excuse me? Music sales? It's all about his clothing line, honey.

DANA

When I'm done with Santa, music'll be the last thing they care about.

EXT. LEO THE BOOKMAKER'S - DAY

At the end of a grimy alley, JASPER reaches up and presses a doorbell on a steel door. A small surveillance camera above his head swivels around.

INT. LEO THE BOOKMAKER'S/SURVEILLANCE CAM - DAY

A video screen shows the surveillance camera's POV. It pans up and down the empty alley at the normal human head height—failing to capture Jasper.

EXT. LEO THE BOOKMAKER'S - DAY

JASPER presses the doorbell again and again.

The surveillance cam moves but doesn't tilt down to see him.

Exasperated, Jasper looks down the alley and spies a trash can.

He sprints to the can and hauls it back to the doorway.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/PRESIDENT'S SUITE - DAY

SANTA lights his pipe and gets comfortable on the bed, but his belly blocks his line of sight to the TV. He pushes his belly down and momentarily sees the screen, but his belly pops back up again.

SANTA gazes at nearby objects: a lamp; a bowl; the telephone then GRUNTS.

He reaches back over his head and opens the night stand draw. Without looking he pulls out a Bible and places it on his belly.

The Bible's weight flattens out his belly. He can see the screen. He balances his glass of scotch on the Bible and puffs his pipe.

ON TV: The horses are led to the starting gate.

EXT. LEO THE BOOKMAKER'S - DAY

JASPER standing on the trash can lid the presses the doorbell again.

INT. LEO THE BOOKMAKER'S/SURVEILLANCE CAM - DAY

Surveillance camera's POV: We see Jasper's face.

EXT. LEO THE BOOKMAKER'S OFFICE - DAY

A BUZZER sounds. The door CLICKS open.

JASPER starts getting down, but the trash can lid flips and he tumbles, landing in the trash can.

The trash can tumbles over spilling trash everywhere. Jasper scrambles out, covered in muck.

Jasper reaches the door as the buzzer stops and CLICKS shut.

JASPER

Shit!

Jasper grabs the trash can and turns it upside down, spilling out the remaining trash. He climbs up on it, standing on the firm bottom of the can and presses the doorbell.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/PRESIDENT'S SUITE - DAY

SANTA is on the bed, eyes glued to the TV. The STARTING BELL rings.

RACE CALLER (VO)
And they're off!

INT. LEO THE BOOKMAKER'S OFFICE - DAY

JASPER, with garbage on his clothes, stands at small iron grate, like an old bank teller's window. LEO peers out at him.

LEO
Race has started, kid.

JASPER
But you heard me outside. I was here...

LEO
Sorry. No can do.

JASPER
That stinks!

LEO
(looks Jasper up and down.)
Well, you'd know. Wouldn't you?

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/PRESIDENT'S SUITE - DAY

SANTA is focused on the horse race. The phone beside him RINGS loudly.

SANTA
Shit! Not now!

RACE CALLER (V.O.)
Number 8, Silver Bells, moves to fourth...

The phone keeps RINGING while Santa tries to ignore it.

RACE CALLER (V.O.)
...heading into the back straight...

As the phone RINGS again, Santa throws a pillow at it, and misses. Reluctantly, he reaches over and picks it up.

INT. CASTLE BASEMENT - DAY

MRS. CLAUS wearing rubber boots in ankle deep in water, leans on a mop, next to a bucket, her phone to her ear.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

MRS. CLAUS

There's water every- where! Nicki
the entire front yard's gone!

SANTA

What do you mean gone?

Santa hits mute button but follows the race on the TV where horse number 8 moves to third place.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Flooded? Another pipe burst?

MRS. CLAUS

No. No. No pipe burst. Just broke
up and drifted off. It's hotter
than a camel's armpit up here!

SANTA

Calm down Hilda.

The water rises, approaching the top of MRS. CLAUS boots. She bends over with difficulty and turns the bucket upside down and stands on it.

MRS. CLAUS

If this goes on any longer nothing
will be here.

SANTA

I'm back Wednesday. What's a few
extra days?

MRS. CLAUS

God damn it! Nicholas this is
different. We have to get out now!
Come back right away!

SANTA

You know I can't. I have to do
publicity. It's the key to the
deal. Besides, what's a little warm
weather?

On the TV, the horses are in the back straight. Number 8 has moved to second.

SANTA (CONT'D)
 You ought to be in New York, it's a
 heat wave here. And they mean it.

The horses reach the final straight.

Santa watches the finish of the race with his ear still to
 the phone and his hand on the remote. Numbers 8 and 3 finish
 in a dead heat.

MRS. CLAUS
 One hundred years, and you never
 take me seriously!

The water rises to the top of the bucket. Wincing with pain,
 Mrs. Claus flips the bucket over with her feet, like a
 skateboarder.

She lands with her feet in the bucket, which begins to float
 like a tiny boat.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)
 Well your prime fucking asset is
 sinking!

Mrs. Claus taps phone off and floats out of the basement
 using the mop handle as a gondola pole.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA/PRESIDENT'S SUITE - DAY

Santa hits activates the sound on the remote.

RACE CALLER (VO)
 The photo says...It's Sea Of Love
 ahead of Silver Bells by a nostril!

Santa grabs the Bible from his stomach and hurls it at the
 TV.

He presses a button on his bedside phone.

SANTA
 Room service? Bring me another
 bottle of scotch and some ice.
 (beat)
 And I want the air conditioning
 fixed, it's a fucking oven.

EXT. NEW YORK ALLEY - DAY

JASPER, bummed out, kicks a can along an empty back street.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/PRESIDENT'S SUITE - NIGHT

The room is clean. SANTA dressed in his traditional red suit, pours a Scotch adding ice from a silver ice bucket on a tall stand. There is a KNOCK at the door.

DANA (OFF)
(cheekily)
You're not dressed, I hope, Santa?

Santa opens the door.

DANA, a green garment bag draped over her arm, is dressed to kill in a short skirt and heels, everything about her designed to get attention.

Santa looks her up and down; his eyes rest on a huge bejeweled Christmas tree ornament in her ample cleavage, the focal point of a gold necklace.

She walks past Santa, looking him over with seductive flicks of her long eyelashes.

DANA (CONT'D)
Cute. But dated... Besides, your
buns will cook under the lights...

Dana throws the garment bag over the back of a chair, unzips it and pulls out a gleaming red suit.

DANA (CONT'D)
Ta da!

Dana hands a surprised Santa the new suit.

DANA (CONT'D)
Reverse fur. A new smart fabric –
body heat goes out. A gift from
Madd Ass Evah, the rap superstar,
one of our other clients. You
stuffed millions of his streaming
gift cards last Christmas. His way
of giving back.

SANTA
A gift? For me?

DANA
Try it on. It's from his brand new
urban-themed upscale ready-to-wear
line, Mental Floss. We're launching
the line tonight at the party.

SANTA
Upscale, urban...?

DANA
(winks)
Go on. Hurry, baby.

Dana shoos Santa into the bathroom. He closes the door.

Dana sits in an easy chair, near a lamp. She adjusts her necklace so the "ornament" in her cleavage captures the light and gleams.

DANA (CONT'D)
(loud)
You're gonna have a blast! Neiditz-Ruckus is our client, too, their new superstore's the hottest place in town. You'll be on every cable news show, and in every gossip site.

Santa emerges from the bathroom in the new suit. He looks amazing, perfect fit, the cut up to date and sleek.

DANA (CONT'D)
Whoah, Santa!

Santa happy with his look poses fashion catwalk style.

SANTA
It covers up my...

DANA
Uh huh, majorly slenderizing.

Dana reaches into her fashionable bag for her phone.

DANA (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Totally rocks! Wait till you get a load of him.
(winks at Santa)
We're out the door...

Santa interrupts Dana waving his hands in her face.

SANTA
Hold on! We can't go! Jasper isn't here.

DANA
(shields her phone)
Jasper?

SANTA
Jasper, the elf.

DANA
Oh Jasper, how could I forget?

Dana rolls her eyes.

DANA (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hang in there, honey, the elf's a
no show...
(beat)
Give him five, that's it.

EXT. DELANCY ST. (FROM LIMO ROOF) - NIGHT

DANA, phone pressed to her ear, is half out of the limo's moon roof.

There's limo gridlock for blocks leading to a red carpet event in the distance. Crowds spill into the street.

Five limos ahead, AUDREY'S head pokes out of another roof. Also on her phone, she waves.

Five more limos ahead of her, SAMANTHA, out the roof, too, and on her phone does the same thing.

INT. LIMO (DELANCY STREET) - NIGHT

SANTA watches DANA's ass in the reflection of his phone as she slides down into the back seat. Santa shakes his head.

SANTA
No answer from Jasper. Unlike him
to miss a party. He's an elf for
Christ sakes!

Santa's fingers nervously drum the upholstery.

DANA
Maybe he walked and beat us there
and can't hear his phone?

EXT. NIEDITZ-RUCKUS DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

Flanked on both sides by barricades, police, paparazzi, and crowds of onlookers, DANA on SANTA's arm leads him down the red carpet. The crowd SCREAMS; CAMERA FLASHES splash them with bursts of light.

INT. NIEDITZ-RUCKUS DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

DANA and SANTA rise into a vast space on a long escalator aglow in a rainbow of colors. All the passengers look glamorous. It's the Oscars meets the most blinged-out hip-hop party.

THUMPING MUSIC BEATS grows louder. Snippets of party banter can be heard.

GUEST ONE

Darling. That's the new English supermodel.

GUEST TWO

Taylor Thrilling? Where?

Santa and Dana get off the escalator in an over-the-top deluxe emporium - sculpted smooth chrome walls display merchandise like high art- handbags on gleaming plinths, expensive shoes attached to fish by colorful ribbons float by in a giant aquarium.

High above the crowd, models on trapezes swing under strobe lights in revealing, chic outfits.

LOUD MUSIC combines with COCKTAIL PARTY HUB-HUB from New York's most beautiful.

Dana air kisses partygoers as she drags Santa through the throng.

They rush by a cosmetics counter with dozens of silver mannequin torsos each extending an arm with an up-turned palm cradling a tiny TV shaped like a makeup compact showing the talking head of TAYLOR THRILLING.

INT. MEDIA SUITE/TV STUDIO - NIGHT

Looking down onto the main floor, two glass-walled rooms house a mini TV studio and a high-tech DJ booth.

Facing a camera in the TV studio, PEREZ HILTON holds a microphone to the supermodel, TAYLOR THRILLING.

TAYLOR

Darling, this place is hotter than lava! Everybody's here!

INT. MEDIA SUITE/DJ BOOTH CONTINUOUS

DJ KATALYST wearing headphones looks up from his console directly at Taylor.

He hits a button marked VOICE ECHO.

INT. NEIDITZ-RUCKUS DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

DANA and SANTA reach the end of the giant room.

Over the music, Taylor Thrilling's voice sample runs through a digital delay.

TAYLOR THRILLING (VO)
(as part of the music)
Hotter than Lava! H-H-Hotter than
lalalalava.

Dana looks up at the media suite and gives DJ KATALYST a "thumbs up".

DJ Katalyst blows Dana a kiss. Dana leans over and yells in Santa's ear.

DANA
Streaming real time over the
Internet!

INT. WALK-IN BOTOX BOUTIQUE - NIGHT

At the bottom of the stairs to Media Suite, the botox boutique—a cross between an uptown beauty parlor and a medical office—doubles as the make-up room for the night's performers and celebrities.

MADD ASS EVAH, a heavy-set black rapper, sits in a salon chair getting his bright orange jacket smoothed by an assistant.

DANA and SANTA enter, Mad Ass gets up.

MAD ASS
Phat suit, Pops!

Madd Ass embraces Santa. A camera CLICKS and FLASHES.

INT. MEDIA SUITE/TV STUDIO - NIGHT

PEREZ HILTON is interviewing LARRY HAVESACK

LARRY
We're putting kids in the driver's
seat.

PEREZ HILTON
How exciting! Buckle up everyone!

LARRY

They email or tweet Santa exactly
want they want and they can check
its availability.

PEREZ HILTON

Won't that spoil the surprise
factor?

LARRY

Kids hear "surprise" and think
"disappointment." They're savvy
consumers. No adult wants a house
full of grumpy kids on Christmas
day...

DANA and SANTA are at the studio door, getting last minute
instructions from a TECHNICIAN in a headset.

PEREZ HILTON

(excited. cuts Larry off)
Look who's here! Your very own
spokesmodel, Santa.

Perez Hilton makes a face indicating Larry is boring and
beckons SANTA towards him.

PEREZ HILTON (CONT'D)

Can I sit on your knee? I bet your
sack is packed!

A MAKEUP ARTIST dabs Santa's nose with powder. But before the
makeup artist finishes, Dana shoves Santa into the spotlight.

As Santa nears Perez Hilton his cell phone RINGS (playing
Santa Claus is Coming to Town). Santa reflexively answers it
as he steps to Perez's microphone.

SANTA

(into phone)
Jasper? In jail? Drugs on the elf?
You must be crazy!

INT. MEDIA SUITE/DJ BOOTH – NIGHT

DJ Katalyst pushes the VOICE ECHO button and nods his head to
the beat.

INT. MEDIA SUITE/TV STUDIO – NIGHT

DANA dives and pushes SANTA away from the mic.

DANA
 (screams)
 Noooo!!!!

DANA, the TECHNICIAN and MAKEUP ARTIST rush to the glass wall that connects to the DJ Booth and pound on it.

DJ Katalyst, oblivious, looks over the dance floor, nodding.

INT. NEIDITZ-RUCKUS DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

The crowd is dancing in the aisles of the store, under flashing strobes. Repeated over the pounding dance music is the DIGITAL SAMPLE of SANTA'S VOICE.

SANTA (DIGITAL VO)
 Drugs on the elf? D-d-d-d-rugs on
 the elf? C-c-c-c-razy! C-c-c-c-
 razy!

The crowd goes wild. Throwing their hands in the air and SCREAMING.

INT. COURT HOUSE - NIGHT

JASPER, disheveled, stands before a JUDGE. The Judge bangs his gavel.

JUDGE
 Bail is set at \$100,000.

EXT. COURT HOUSE - NIGHT

Paparazzi and news crews line the steps of the Court House as JASPER and SANTA leave. Jasper stoops, doing "the perp" walk, hiding his face as CAMERAS FLASH.

REPORTER 1
 Hey Santa's little dope fiend, any
 comment?

REPORTER 2
 Jasper, are all your Christmases
 white?

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/PRESIDENT'S SUITE - NIGHT

JASPER sits on a chintz sofa and SANTA in an easy chair. They each have a drink.

JASPER

I swear. I was minding my own business, sitting in the park, wondering how you were going to deal with me missing the bet...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

JASPER sits on a park bench. Around him, people are doing typical park activities; playing instruments, walking dogs etc.

In front of Jasper stands a swarthy-looking BALLOON SELLER with balloons tied into animal shapes.

An unmarked van drives in front of Jasper and stops. Four UNDERCOVER DETECTIVES in street clothes get out of the van and approach the Balloon Seller.

DETECTIVE 1

Can I see your license?

BALLOON SELLER

(foreign accent)

License? For Balloon?

DETECTIVE 2

This is New York. If you're sellin' snowflakes, you need a fuckin' permit.

(to the other detectives)

Let's roll.

Detectives 3 and 4 step forward and seize the balloons by the strings. The Balloon Seller freezes with fear.

Detectives 1 and 2 grab the Balloon Seller, put his hands behind his back and cuff him.

Jasper is horrified.

JASPER

Jeez, he's just selling balloons.
Leave him alone!

All four Detectives look at Jasper.

DETECTIVE 1

Did you hear something? Something small?

DETECTIVE 2

No. But I can smell something big.

Detective 1 keeps his hold on the Balloon Seller, Detective 3 hangs onto the balloons while Detectives 2 and 4 move to either side of Jasper and tower over him.

JASPER

I said leave him alone.

Detective 2 smiles. Detective 4 frowns.

DETECTIVE 4

Show me your ID, sonny?

JASPER

I'm from the North Pole. We don't need any.

DETECTIVE 2

The North Pole, eh? What you got in your douchebag there.

Detective 4 leans forward and seizes Jasper's pouch, tugging it from his belt.

Detective 4 opens the pouch, pulls out the wad of money and a rolled up multicolored handkerchief. He unfurls it. Unwrapping a vial of white powder.

DETECTIVE 4

What's this?

(laughs)

Ice?

JASPER

That makes the reindeer fly.

Detectives 2 and 4 grab Jasper, hurl him to the ground and SNAP on handcuffs.

DETECTIVE 4 (VO)

Get your freaky fuckin' midget ass in the van!

Jasper is tossed into the back of the police van face first.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/PRESIDENT'S SUITE - NIGHT

JASPER and SANTA are sitting as before.

JASPER

And that's when it started to get
real ugly.

Jasper rubs his wrists. Santa nods sympathetically, pours himself another drink. Then waves the bottle at Jasper. Jasper accepts and yawns.

DISSOLVE TO:

The hotel room is dimly lit. Jasper is conked out on the couch. Santa paces the room in his underwear drinking from the bottle.

DISSOLVE TO:

Santa is asleep on the bed, lying across it with his head and feet over the sides, his belly up. The bottle lies empty by him. Light creeps into the room around the drapes.

EXT. SANTA'S CASTLE (NORTH POLE) - DAY

WIDE SHOT of the Castle. There is a loud CRACK. The castle shudders and starts to lean to one side.

INT. BAUBLE BASH & BUXX OFFICE - DAY

A grid of large flat-screen TVs delivers the morning news.

SCREEN 1: CNN, Dateline Topeka, Kansas.

A middle-aged, middle-American blonde woman wears a badge with the initials M.A. G.U.T.S. She's identified as FAITH BICKERS, president of Mothers Against Growing Up Too Soon.

FAITH BICKERS

What message is Santa bringing to
our children? That flashy suit? Rap
music? Now we know— Drugs!

DANA, AUDREY and SAMANTHA sit on a long bulbous orange couch clutching take out cappuccino cups; mouths open in awe. Dana operates the remote like a zombie.

SCREEN 2: FOX NEWS.

A red-faced, middle-aged man, identified as REV. BRANDON HYDE of the Unilateral Church of Television is ranting.

REV. BRANDON HYDE

Santa or Satan? Look at the
letters.

(yells)

Look at the letters in the names!

S-A-N-T-A. S-A-T-A-N. You see
they're the SAME!

CU: SCREEN 3 CNBC Business News

Looming behind an ANCHOR WOMAN is a stock performance chart,
the line headed rapidly down.

ANCHOR WOMAN
Allegations of possible drug
trafficking involving Father
Christmas's inner circle have sent
the retail sector into a nosedive
in pre-opening trading. Hello,
Marcia?

The screen cuts to a businesswoman indentified as MARCIA
HOLDAUT standing in front of an office building with a
corporate name plaque, Pilphor, Fleese & Skwander Financial
Services.

MARCIA HOLDAUT
Consumer trust has melted
overnight. Don't expect holiday
shopping to shine this year. And
that will take the rest of the
economy down with it.

SCREEN 4: NETWORK TALK SHOW

The HOST, with exceptionally telegenic hair walks from the
stage up the aisle into the audience.

HOST
Are Americans flocking to
alternative holiday celebrations?
(beat)
Chanukah?

A large number of audience raise hands.

HOST (CONT'D)
The Buddhist Thingyat? Taking
Hollywood by storm.

A few hands go up.

The host stops. A white man in his mid-twenties, STEVE,
stands and talks into the mic held by the Host.

HOST (CONT'D)
What do you say? Steve? Kwanzaa? It
lasts a whole seven days.

STEVE
Dude, like, what else am I doing?

HOST
Would you celebrate with African-American friends?

STEVE
Who?

The screen changes.

Dana surfs quickly through a half-dozen more channels, pausing an instant, producing a medley of voices.

TV VOICES
(medley)
Santa... elf... drugs... kids... toyz...
littlest end-users...

Dana zaps the TVs off.

An ASSISTANT enters the frame and walks to the couch.

ASSISTANT
The Stock Exchanged canceled the
opening bell ringing by Santa and
Larry.

Dana, Audrey and Sam look at each other in silence for two beats.

DANA, AUDREY, SAM
(together)
We are soooo fucked!

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/PRESIDENT'S SUITE - DAY

SANTA and JASPER sleep on the bed and sofa respectively. Santa's CELL PHONE RINGS. He rolls over and swats it. It keeps RINGING.

Santa lying on his back, brings the phone up to his eye. The ID reads: NORTH POLE

SANTA
(gravel voice)
Shit!

Santa taps the phone and places it to his ear.

MRS. CLAUS (VO)
Have you lost you're fuckin' mind?

SANTA
(cheery, charming voice)
Hilda! Nice to...

EXT. SANTA'S CASTLE (NORTH POLE) - DAY

MRS. CLAUS stands on the front steps of the castle phone to ear, gazing into the distance. The horizon tilts. And the entire front yard is under water.

Ornate gateposts rise up out of the water. A large, intricately carved sleigh floats between them. Two sea lions, ride in the sleigh playing "pat-a-cake" with their front flippers.

MRS CLAUS
Nero fiddled. At least he played music. And what do you do? Make whoopee with some hooker and drug addict elves.

SANTA (VO)
It's a mistake. That woman is Dana, she's P.R. Besides, Jasper wasn't at the party he was in jail.

Mrs. Claus turns and heads inside the giant front doors of the castle.

MRS. CLAUS
Like I give a shit. You can't have a fuckin' party without ice.

INT. SANTA'S CASTLE (NORTH POLE)- DAY

ELVES in rubber boots wade ankle deep in water as they pack the castle's contents - candelabrum, tapestries, TVs and toasters - into see through plastic containers. Mrs. Claus passes through the mayhem and clutter, continuing on her phone.

MRS.CLAUS (CONT.)
You can sink your business, but not me.

She stubs her toe.

MRS. CLAUS
Ouch!

She looks down at a small air compressor.

Sound of AIR RUSHING. A bright orange inflatable craft rises around Mrs. Claus, swallowing her like a giant baseball glove.

INT. MAD ASS'S LIMO - DAY

MAD ASS wearing a lime green suit and fake fur fedora is in the back, prowling the city streets. The barrier behind the driver is covered by multiple screens showing charts and graphs of stock prices, all in free fall.

Mad Ass calmly talks into his phone.

MAD ASS

You heard me correct. I don't care
what everybody else is doin'.

INT. TOYZ ON DEMAND!/CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Resembling NASA's control room, a giant interactive map of the Toyz On Demand! global network fills a wall facing an amphitheater of computer terminals.

Mayhem is in full swing. LIGHTS FLASH and ALARMS RING.
TECHIES run around YELLING.

LARRY HAVESACK stands with an entourage of EXECUTIVES watching the screens. Nearby TECH GUY 1 and TECH GUY 2 tap away at the keyboards.

TECH GUY 1's screen displays a flat-lined graph.

TECH GUY 1

North Pole servers are down.
Santa's email is bouncing. Kids
know something's up.

TECH GUY 2's screen flashes color-coded words written multiple languages; French, Spanish, Hungarian, Korean.

TECH GUY 2

Social around the planet. Kids have
gone cold turkey on Christmas.
They're making up their own games,
sir.

EXT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/ENTRANCE - DAY

A demonstration is in full force on the sidewalk as MAD ASS gets out of his limo.

DEMONSTRATORS with cardboard reindeer antlers on their heads hold signs, "STOP REINDEER DRUG ABUSE", "SANTA: CAUGHT RED NOSED" and "END SLEIGH SLAVERY."

DEMONSTRATORS

(chanting)

Animal rights before silent nights!
 Animal rights before silent nights!
 Animal rights before silent nights!

Unfazed, Mad Ass pushes through the crowd.

DEMONSTRATOR 1 notices him.

DEMONSTRATOR 1

Hey! The big black green guy's in a
 fur hat!

Some demonstrators jostle Mad Ass. He uses his bulk to keep going, past the security guards and police to the door.

The DOORMAN recognizes him and tips his hat.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/PRESIDENT'S SUITE - DAY

Semi-darkness, drapes drawn with a few lamps on.

JASPER sleeps on the sofa. MAD ASS sits in an armchair with his hat in his lap. SANTA, in a hotel bathrobe, is in a chair next to a room service cart with untouched breakfast platters and a giant silver coffee pot. A cup of coffee is on the side table.

SANTA

Coffee?

MAD ASS

I'll pass.

SANTA

Whiskey?

Mad Ass waves "no" with his hand. Santa shrugs, reaches down by the chair leg and lifts up a bottle of Scotch and pours a hefty dose into his coffee.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Now, young man, how can I help you?

MAD ASS

Help me?

(chuckles)

No, no, I came to help you.

SANTA

Well, there's a first.

MAD ASS

Listen up, Pops. I know a thing or two about being America's most wanted.

(beat)

Every time I drop a new song or video I catch it from all sides: Too sexy, too violent, too hype, not this or that. No matter, still goes triple platinum.

SANTA

You're talented. So?

MAD ASS

I figured, none of these motherfuckers can tell you how to stay focused.

Santa swills his coffee, watching the brew and booze blend.

SANTA

Stay focused, huh?

MAD ASS

You've got to think of the shorties.

Santa glances over at Jasper, who lets out a small SNORE.

SANTA

The elves?

MAD ASS

The kids. They always getting exed outta the picture. My boy, Lil' M.A., he loves you Santa. Last year, when you were bustin' your ass stuffing my wireless headphones into every stocking in the nation, like holiday toe jam, Lil' M.A. got his first SUV from you! You know, the kiddie kind. Had a ball. Damn near ran over every pit bull in the park.

SANTA

(slightly sarcastically)

That's nice, Mr. Evah. Touching.

MAD ASS

Yeah. Sweet. The point is: He couldn't care less what they're saying on TV.

Kids just want their god damn toys.
Nothing. Nobody's orange alert,
disease, fire, famine or flood can
keep them from their toys. Bottom
line.

SANTA

You're losing me, here.

MAD ASS

It's parents getting all moralistic
on your ass. Kids don't give a
rabbit's behind.

SANTA

What should I do, Mr. Evah?

MAD ASS

Now, don't sweat this. Mad Ass nods
towards Jasper Looks like homeboy
was set up. Somebody's making a
play. That's all I can say now.

Santa nods. Mad Ass gets up and heads to the door. Turning
the knob, he looks over his shoulder at Santa.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)

Watch yourself. And don't wear that
reverse fur suit 'round here.

Mad Ass puts his hat back on his head.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)

Folks can't tell fake from real no
more.

EXT. SANTA'S CASTLE (NORTH POLE) - DAY

A flotilla of inflatable rubber lifeboats bobs in the water
encroaching the front door of the castle.

MRS. CLAUS clambers into the first boat, alone. She is
followed by dozens of ELVES scurrying into the other
lifeboats.

The lifeboats are lashed together with ropes and start to
float away from the castle en masse.

The entire castle lurches. There is a tremendous SUCKING
sound. Water is GUSHING into the front door of the castle.

The castle begins rapidly sinking. The front door is soon beneath the sea.

A GURGLING noise gets louder. The flotilla of lifeboats drifts further away from the castle.

Soon, all that is visible is the top of the turret above the water.

In the distance a storm is brewing with thunder and lighting on the horizon.

The waves start getting bigger. The ropes connecting the boats get pulled and strained.

INT. FEDERAL RESERVE/CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

JANET YELLEN sits behind her large wooden desk, the American flag to one side. In front of her is a brass desk plate inscribed CHAIRMAN FEDERAL RESERVE.

JANET YELLEN
(into speakerphone)
As the world's biggest toy distributor, you have to clean up this mess. Confidence must be restored. No more damaging information. We need irrational spending at the end of each year. Our way of life depends on it.

LARRY (VO)
Yes, Ms Yellen.

JANET YELLEN
Good. You do your part. We'll do ours.

EXT. ARTIC SEA - DAY

A storm rages. Lightning cracks the black sky revealing towering waves.

The ropes between the lifeboats are tugged in all directions. They fray and SNAP.

The lifeboat containing MRS. CLAUS goes one way and the ones with the ELVES scatter and drift in the opposite direction.

We follow Mrs. Claus's lifeboat. It is alone, tossed up and down, it moves toward a small shape on the horizon.

MRS. CLAUS

How fitting! My final audience is
with myself. I'm going to die alone
because nobody ever listens to me.

ZOOMING in on the distant shape, we see a ship heading toward
MRS. Claus.

The ship's bow plows through the rough sea, the Norwegian
flag flying at its stern.

The ship comes closer and closer to Mrs. Claus. But the other
lifeboats are no longer visible.

INT. MAD ASS'S LIMO - DAY

MAD ASS and JASPER are in the back. Jasper's knapsack is next
to him.

Out the darkened windows Jasper witnesses scenes of economic
collapse, storefronts are being boarded up, signs reading
"going out of business sale!" sprout everywhere.

Mad Ass eyes on the stock market action on the computer
screens along the divider behind the driver.

MAD ASS

You're an inspiration, Jasper.
Today is an excellent day to be
short.
(chuckles)

JASPER

I'm short every day. And everyday
somebody makes a big deal about it.

MAD ASS

No offense. But today I'm making
big deals all over.

Outside the landscape is increasingly blighted. They drive
alongside railway tracks.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)

Timing is everything Jasper. You're
at the center of this shitstorm.
Better hightail outta town.

JASPER

I'm grounded. On every watch list.
I can't leave.

MAD ASS

I've been in your shoes. And now's
the time to keep a low profile.
Cool your heels somewhere else.

The limo stops in a railyard full of freight trains. The door
next to Jasper pops open.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)

Jump into one of those.

Mad Ass points at a boxcar covered in graffiti.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)

Head west. When the heat is off
I'll send someone.

JASPER

Do I have a choice?

Mad Ass hands Jasper his knapsack.

INT. TOYZ ON DEMAND HQ!/BOARDROOM - DAY

Company EXECUTIVES are seated around the table. LARRY is at
one end, SANTA the other.

LARRY

(nervous and fast)

There's only one thing to do: Fire
the elves. You've got to distance
yourself completely.

SANTA

Jasper didn't do anything wrong.
Besides one bad elf doesn't spoil
the whole bunch.

LARRY

Santa, the elves have been a wrench
in the works this entire deal. Now
they're bringing down the whole
house of cards. You're Dutch -
tolerant of this bullshit- but it
doesn't fly here in the U.S. And
this is the biggest market in the
world.

(addresses the executive
at his right)

Claiborne?

CLAIBORNE

As financial officer, we have to
keep our investors happy.

(directly at Santa)
 Make a statement denouncing the
 elves' lifestyle and sack them, our
 shareholders will quit dumping
 stock.

LARRY
 Whaddya say? Wall Street always
 rewards a little creative
 downsizing. Our stock bounces back—
 Bingo! Confidence in Christmas
 returns.

Santa remains silent, growing redder in the face.

FRANCESCA
 Look, even before this, um,
 incident, elves were an image
 problem.

CLAIBORNE
 They're freaks.

FRANCESCA
 Nobody gets why they wear funny
 clothes and make toys. It's not
 normal. They don't have families of
 their own. They're scary.

SANTA
 Don't scare me half as much as you.
 But I've never met an unemployed
 elf. Now that's scary.

LARRY
 (conciliatory)
 I have nothing against them
 personally, but... but, they're
 square pegs. They don't fit into
 the round hole of Toyz On Demand
 corporate culture.

CLAIBORNE
 They're not unionized. So it's
 moot, anyway.

SANTA
 Outrageous! The most skilled
 craftsmen on the face of the earth!
 Can build anything. Anything.
 Totally irreplaceable.

FRANCESCA

Ah, not in South East Asia, they're not.

SANTA

This is beginning to look like a set up. I'm going to get my lawyers to...

LARRY

We know about the Pole, Santa.

SANTA

What?!!

CLAIBORNE

This morning, Mrs. Claus was picked up by a Norwegian fishing vessel.

SANTA

My god! Why didn't you tell me?

CLAIBORNE

The State Department is keeping it under wraps.

LARRY

We're working closely with the government. She's doing fine. You'll speak with her soon. A video link to the ship is being set up.

SANTA

When did they find her?

LARRY

Just a few hours ago.

SANTA

(angry)

A few hours! Why wasn't I told immediately?

FRANCESCA

We've been waiting for an appropriate time.

SANTA

And just when the hell would that be?

(stands up)

What's this bullshit really about?

FRANCESCA

The last thing we need is for the public to think you've abandoned your wife at sea.

CLAIBORNE

Not at a time like this.

SANTA

Before I've outsourced the elves?
Is that what you mean?
(sits again.)

LARRY

Santa, we all feel terrible about Mrs. Claus. We know what she's like. But there's no way to tell how the media would spin it.

SANTA

Like Jasper?

The executives avoid eye contact with Santa.

LARRY

Yes, like Jasper. Christmas is about family.

SANTA

Every damn family but mine! Santa puts his head in his hands. I get treated like a fucking toy.

LARRY

Somewhere down the road, the manufacturing was going to be moved south. That's the reality of the global economy. Forget about the Pole. It's history.

CLAIBORNE

Your business model was unsustainable. Giving away free stuff to non-wage earners. How long could that last?

(clears throat)

We bought your image: Your only truly valuable asset.

FRANCESCA

And you're legally obliged to maintain it. You know that. It's in the contract.

CLAIBORNE

Right now that asset is in the toilet.

FRANCESCA

And the elves are flushing us with it.

SANTA

You guys are un-fuckin' believable.

CLAIBORNE

It's business, Santa.

Claiborne slides a document across the table to Santa.

CLAIBORNE (CONT'D)

Read this on camera. That's all you have to do.

Santa folds his arms.

SANTA

I'm not lifting a finger till I speak to Mrs. Claus. You can't blackmail me.

LARRY

Please, look it over. By the time we've taped you, the link to the ship will be in place.

SANTA

You're so full of shit I can smell it coming out your ears.

LARRY

Believe me, Mrs. Claus is fine. Really.

SANTA

Then why can't I talk to her, now?

CLAIBORNE

Honestly, Santa, you don't want to go there. She's had a rough time.

SANTA

Let me talk to my goddamn wife!

FRANCESCA

(to Larry)

Larry, if he insists, I think we should.

LARRY
What the hell.

Larry hits the speakerphone button on the unit in front of him.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Bring up the ship!

A few lines flicker down the flat screen TV at the end of the room. A picture appears. The picture tilts from side to side. The screen fills with flushed faces, careening in and out of a wobbly camera shot. SOUND CRACKLES.

TV SCREEN

The image resolves.

Packed like sardines into the ship's galley, the ship's CREW sways to and fro, throwing back shots of liquor and SINGING Norwegian sea shanties.

MRS. CLAUS is swaddled in an oversized Norwegian fisherman's sweater with a fisherman's capped stuck lopsided on her head. She has a half-eaten pickled herring rollmop (sandwich) in her hand, her other arm is wrapped around a tasty looking sailor, OLAF.

MRS. CLAUS
(drunk)
Hey Nicki meet Olaf! He'sh a real
fuckin' hero! Ha! Fissh me out,
baby!

Mrs. Claus drunkenly swings her head around and kisses Olaf smack on the lips.

CONFERENCE ROOM

SANTA
Hilda!

Larry hits a button and the TV goes off.

CLAIBORNE
The State Department has a point,
don't you agree?

EXT. ARCTIC OCEAN - DAY

The lifeboats carrying ELVES are battling the storm but it is losing its intensity.

In the far distance, the Norwegian ship heads off in a different direction.

Above the ship, at the horizon the sky begins to clear and we see what looks like a shooting star.

ZOOM into the star and it's revealed to be an orbiting satellite.

EXT. PLANET EARTH IN SPACE - DAY

Satellites with CARTOON NEWS NETWORK logo orbit the earth, beaming signals down.

TV ANNOUNCER (VO)
We interrupt our regular program to
bring you breaking news.

MONTAGE of famous landmarks; Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, Empire State Building, Taj Mahal, Sydney Opera House etc.

MONTAGE resolves to an aerial view of suburban houses and cityscapes of tall buildings.

DISSOLVES TO: single apartment building with glowing screens visible through all the windows.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Three CHILDREN sit on the floor in front of a large TV, they have iPads in their hands. SANTA in CU is on the screen behind a desk. A tear rolls down his cheek.

SANTA
Those naughty elves are no longer
working for me...
(sniffs)
Instead, the nice people of Toyz On
Demand will make sure, all of you
will get the presents you want
under your tree on Christmas day.

TV ANNOUNCER (VO)
Now, it's back to our regular
schedule of cartoons and ads for
sugary snacks.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK (AERIAL VIEW)- DAY

The paths and trails of Central Park can be seen. People look like ants as they move through the park. Long shadows from the west indicate it's late in the day. A solo figure becomes the focus. He moves along a path near the Boat Pond.

The man stops on a bridge over the pond. Little clouds of smoke rise from the man's pipe.

ZOOM IN:

It is clear its Santa's pipe, the bowl carved in the shape of an elf's head. SANTA stares vacantly out over the pond. Puffing away. He gropes for a bottle of Scotch tucked into his pocket. A boat with a man rowing and a woman as passenger passes beneath. The man stops rowing and the couple kisses.

INT. ELF LIFEBOAT (ARTIC SEA) - DAY

Framed through a pair of toy binoculars, we see endless calm water in all directions.

BENJY (VO)
Any other boats?

The view through the binoculars swings around and we see BENJY's face.

CUT TO:

ELTARK, BENJY and BICKLES are wearing life jackets and eating small boxes rations as they bob up and down. ZORPE, also in a life jacket, peers through a pair of toy binoculars.

Eltark rummages through some pockets in his vest and pulls out a brightly colored GPS gadget, clearly designed as a toy, and boots it up.

ELTARK
Wow, that storm has blown us near
Alaska. We could make landfall any
day!

BICKLES
Um. Does anyone have any more to
eat. I've finished mine.

ZORPE
Hey, I can see another lifeboat!
... I think.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE/ROSE GARDEN - DAY

The garden is sunlit and splendid and crammed with kids.

THE PRESIDENT and LARRY stand on a stage at the end of the garden. Behind them stand rows of children of all races. The President is about to speak into a microphone on a lectern, stage center. A WHITE HOUSE STAFFER walks in front of the stage.

WHITE HOUSE STAFFER
Hold it! Mr. President.

The Staffer signals for two WHITE BOYS directly behind the president to swap places with a BLACK GIRL and an LATINO BOY who are further away. The Staffer gives the President a nod.

THE PRESIDENT
Kids are our last hope for the future.
(beat)
We need them to consume like there's no tomorrow if we plan on seeing it ourselves.
(beat, eyes narrow.)
No American, no matter how big or small, should shirk his or her responsibility at this crucial time.
That's why, along with the Federal Reserve, we're embracing Kid-E-Kredit.

Children in the row behind the President each hold up a cardboard sign with a single letter painted on it, spelling out K-I-D-e-K-R-E-D-I-T.

The audience CHEERS.

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Folks, think of it as a G.I. bill for our littlest economic warriors.

CLAPPING from White House Aides.

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
With no approval necessary—not even parental approval—kids can spend at zero percent interest on items like toys, games and candy until they're grown.

The children burst into APPLAUSE.

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Industry psychologists agree, this is just what youngsters need to motivate them: to stay healthy and off drugs.

The President reaches into his suit pocket and pulls out a Day-Glo purple credit card.

XCU: On Kid-E-Kredit card.

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Even the poorest orphan in the
meanest neighborhood can now buy
his way out.

The crowd ROARS.

The President motions for quiet.

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
As you know, my wife and I have
raised two legendary consumers.
We're mighty proud.

Sporadic HAND CLAPS.

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
We believe parents have long been
too concerned about providing for
their children. The good news, with
Kid-E-Kredit you no longer need
bother. Let them spend what they
want, freeing you to spend what you
want. The whole family can
participate in reviving our great
economy.

The crowd CHEERS LOUDLY.

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
My good friend Larry Havesack and
his son Michael will do the honors.

Larry steps forward, lifts his small son, MICHAEL, up to the
wood veneer Presidential lectern.

Michael holds a Kid-E-KredIT card in his hand. It's logo
glints.

Running down the side of the Presidential lectern is a credit
card reader, clamped onto the Presidential Seal. Michael
swipes the card down the card reader.

A SMALL CANNON fires streamers and red, white and blue
balloons are released.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - DAY

SANTA walks along the sidewalk.

SANTA
 (under his breath)
 That old bitch gets lucky with a
 sailor. And what do I get?

At the street corner, Santa turns and looks up Broadway to Times Square, a few blocks away. Even in daylight Times Square has an electric glow.

A DISTANT RHYTHM gradually gets louder: Ba-da-ba-da-ba-da-BAH! Ba-da-ba-da-ba-da-BAH! Ba-da-ba-da-ba-da-BAH!

All types of people are rushing out of office buildings and charging toward the bright lights. They are happy, jubilant.

MAN RUNNING
 Yippee! I can't believe it!

CAR HORNS HONK in time with the growing rhythm.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Times Square is packed, like a spontaneous New Year's celebration. Streamers, balloons, people in silly hats and glasses are everywhere.

Traffic is frozen. Drivers and passengers jump out of cars and dance, joining a giant conga line of all shapes, sizes and colors— snaking down Broadway.

The conga line passes the street-level studio of ABC, rounds the triangular building, One Times Square, and heads back up Seventh Avenue, past the Reuters Building and MTV.

SOUND UP:

Ba-da-ba-da-ba-da-BAH!

Dancers kick their legs to the side every few steps, hands on the hips of the person in front of them.

Above the dancers runs the "electric zipper", the band of synchronized lights showing the Wall Street Journal's headlines racing around the triangular building at the center of Times square.

The message reads: MARKET SAYS KID-E-KREDIT, BEST DEAL SINCE NEW DEAL.

CAMERA CREWS marked with news media logos capture the scene and beam it up on mobile satellite dishes mounted on news cruiser vans parked.

SANTA makes his way to the edge of the throng. He taps a cheering woman on the shoulder.

SANTA
What's happening?

DELIRIOUS WOMAN
We're all free! Kid-E-kredit!
YeeeeeeHaaah!

An overjoyed man standing next to Santa joins the conversation.

OVERJOYED MAN
Not a dime more on the little
bastards!

Santa steps back, confused. He spies a vacant cab beyond the crowd and rushes to it.

INT. TAXI - DAY

The cab SCREECHES off. The driver's foot is to the floor as he dodges in and out of traffic.

CABBIE
(talking a mile a minute)
Stimulus package, hey? This
President knows a stimulus package
when he opens one, right?

The cabbie mimes a coke sniffing gesture off his wrist.

As the cab bounces and jolts, Santa's eyes flicker at the rapidly passing streetscape out the window while his beard flies up in his face.

CABBIE (CONT'D)
I can't stand his ass, but this
beats a tax break for the rich any
day. Makes my Christmas a cakewalk.

SANTA
Really?

CABBIE
Kids buy their own stuff. Cool. Who
keeps up with all the games and
crap? I got no clue what to get my
son, "Mr. Everything Sucks". My
daughter? Forget it. Why should I
pay for shit I don't understand?
Let 'em pick their own.

SANTA

If it's their money, it's not a gift. Is it? That's' not Christmas.

CABBIE

Some point you gotta tell 'em what the deal is. Nobody got responsibility no more. That's the problem. Kid-E-Kredit, kids are gonna go ballistic. What the country needs.

The Cabbie looks back at Santa in the rearview mirror.

CABBIE (CONT'D)

Debt will motivate your ass like nobody's business. Why'd ya think I drive a cab?

The cab gets stuck in traffic.

The Cabbie looks over his shoulder at Santa.

CABBIE (CONT'D)

Know what I think? People gotta pick their own fuckin' holiday. Seriously.

SANTA

What?

CABBIE

Try going anywhere over the holidays? Roads: Gridlock.

The Cabbie looks back at the jammed road in front then back at Santa.

CABBIE (CONT'D)

Airports: zoos. Trains: mayhem. For what? People don't live like that no more, like it's some tiny-assed alpine village with sleds and shit. Hell no! If it wasn't for the food I'd stay put.

SANTA

Yeah. Cookies and milk.

CABBIE

If everyone chose their own goddamn Christmas day, it would be cool. Let market forces sort it out—just like weddings.

The Cabbie turns to the front the traffic clears, he hits the gas. The cab lurches, speeds up and bumps up and down.

Santa's cell phone RINGS.

INT. BAUBLE BUXX & BASH OFFICE - DAY

DANA at her desk talking into her phone.

DANA
(sultry)
Hey big guy. Feel the bounce?
Things are looking up. We need to
talk.

SANTA (VO)
Sure, uh, I can talk.

DANA
Honey, I mean up close and
personal.

INT. TAXI - DAY

SANTA breaks out in a sweat.

EXT. ALASKAN BEACH - DAY (DUSK)

Through the leaves of trees in a small wood, we see the lifeboat containing BENJY, ELTARK, ZORPE and BICKLES wash up on a small sandy beach that's part of a rugged coastline.

Hidden among the trees, shadowy figures observe the elves landing.

The elves pile out the lifeboat and drag it up the beach.

Exhausted, the elves collapse and lean against the boat, falling asleep.

The figures in the shadows move.

Time passes.

From BENJY's POV on the ground we look up to see the barrel of an assault rifle aiming down.

Standing over the elves are three camouflaged and heavily armed MILITIA MEN, with various militia badges sewn onto their uniforms.

MILITIA MAN #1
More like aliens than G-Men.

Militia Man #1 kicks the sole of BENJY's boot.

MILITIA MAN #1 (CONT'D)
Where are you from?

BENJY
(scared and startled)
Ahh...The North Pole.

ZORPE
It melted.

MILITIA MAN #2
(to Zorpe))
Who asked you to speak?

MILITIA MAN #1
You guys aren't from the
government?

ELTARK
We're elves. We don't have a
government.

Militia man #1 lowers his gun, the other Militia men follow.

MILITIA MAN #1
Huh, now you're speakin' our
language.

MILITIA MAN #3
Awesome! Totally off the grid.

MILITIA MAN #1
Welcome little brothers.

EXT. NORWEGIAN FISHING VESSEL - NIGHT

MRS. CLAUS and OLAF stand at the top deck rail, looking at the moonlight playing on the ocean. Mrs. Claus has let her hair down and wisps of it float on a soft breeze. Without her glasses appears relaxed and happy.

Their hands are on the rail close but not touching. Mrs. Claus looks down at Olaf's large muscular hands.

MRS. CLAUS
You know, Nicholas had the strong
hands of a craftsman. That's what
first attracted me to him.

OLAF
Please. Don't talk about your
husband.

What kind of man abandons his
beautiful wife to the cruel cold
sea?

MRS. CLAUS

Sorry.

Mrs. Claus moves her hand closer to Olaf's so they are almost touching. Olaf lifts his hand places it on top of hers.

OLAF

This sea can take a life in
minutes. But it gives life too. It
teems with it. You deserve to start
a new life, Hilda.

INT. WARLDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/BULL AND BEAR RESTAURANT - NIGHT

SANTA and DANA sit at a candle-lit table in the ornate, "old world" dining room.

Santa eats surf and turf. Dana a light pasta dish. Red wine fills their wine glasses. Santa is nervous.

DANA

(looking around)
Very masculine, this place.
(winks)
Easy to see why you like it.

SANTA

Er...well... it's in the hotel.

Santa takes a big quaff of his wine.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Um...really, anywhere would be
delightful in your company.

Dana raises her glass.

DANA

Nothing's sexier than a very, very
wealthy man who may just happen to
be single again.

Santa leans over with his glass and CLINKS hers.

DANA (CONT'D)

To the bounce, and you on top.

SANTA

I'll drink to that!

Santa drains his glass. A waiter brings another bottle of red wine and pours more into Santa's glass. Dana looks at Santa's meal.

DANA

Such a healthy appetite. Now, tell me all about your travels...

EXT. MILITIA CAMP - NIGHT

Insects BUZZ around the floodlights of a remote camp. A group of ELVES and MILITIA MEN mill about around a small open fire in the middle of a square formed by some barracks style huts.

MILITIA MAN #3

Man, have you guys been screwed over. Horrible.

MILITIA MAN #1

And it gets worse. You've heard the news? The elves shake their heads. The Big Government is in cahoots. They're printing money, giving it away to kids to buy toys and float the economy. All on your backs.

BENJY

What do you mean?

MILITIA MAN #1

All part of their end game. That's why we're here. Far away as we can get before the whole financial shebang collapses. That's their plan to take over the world.

ELTARK

We need to do something about this!

MILITIA MAN #1

It may be too late.

MILITIA MAN #2

We can help you get to the lower 48. Shouldn't be hard. You guys are totally off the grid. No I.D., no social numbers. No records.

ZORPE

Revenge? But how? We've only ever made toy weapons.

MILITIA MAN #3

Toys, huh? The perfect cover.

BICKLES

I don't know. Sounds scary. And
what about Jasper?

ZORPE

No doubt he's still ass-kissing the
fat man.

BICKLES

(defensively)

Jasper's a stand-up elf! He saved
my life.

MILITIA MAN #2

Either way, why don't you use this
Jasper dude to get to your real
target?

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/BULL AND BEAR RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Romantic PIANO MUSIC TINKLES. The candles on the table are
now short.

SANTA drains his glass and a WAITER refills it. Dana's glass
is almost full, and she puts her hand over it to prevent the
waiter from pouring.

A dessert cake in the middle of the table, has the side
nearer to Santa missing. Dana's side is barely nibbled.

Santa's craggy hand creeps across the tablecloth toward
Dana's manicured fingers. Santa clasps Dana's hand.

DANA

Santa, sweetie, the economic pick
up has been sooo successful, but
everyone's wondering will it have
legs?

SANTA

(tipsy)

Yours are the only legs I care
about up ticking.

DANA

Gosh Santa, I thought you liked me
for my brains.

SANTA

Brainsh, yesh. Brainsh.

DANA

And I've been using them to
brainstorm with the marketing
people.

(beat)

We need to roll out Christmas
quarterly.

SANTA'S P.O.V.:

Dana's image blurs then splits, drifting into two. Santa is
seeing double. Then momentarily it doubles again and there
are four Dana's in front of him.

SANTA

Quarterly?

SANTA'S P.O.V. (CONT.)

Santa let's go of Dana's hand. His vision reverts back to
double.

SANTA

You're bullshittssing me!

Santa reaches for his drink. In Santa's POV it's two right
hands reaching for two glasses.

DANA

So the recovery won't stall.

Confused, Santa knocks over the glass. Dana jumps back.

SANTA

Four fucking Chrissshmassshes a
year! Four?!

Santa red faced, mops up the spilled wine with a napkin.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Ssshit Dana, I'm trying to retire
for Chrissakes! I didn't sign up
for thisss. I can't do Christamas
(pauses while calculating)
..every thirteen weeksh.

Santa rights his fallen glass. He holds the napkin over it
and rings it, draining the wine back in. He sits back,
slumped in his chair.

INT. BOX CAR - NIGHT

A TRAIN HORN blows against the CLICKETY-CLACK.

JASPER seats on the floor opposite an open door. The nighttime countryside passes by.

Jasper is on his cell phone. The train noise masks the other side of the call.

JASPER
What's with the wacky number you
dialed from? ...Encrypted?
(a few beats)
Jeez. Sure I'm pissed off.
(a few beats)
This whole thing is my fault. If I
hadn't got busted...

EXT. MILITIA CAMP/SEAPLANE JETTY - NIGHT

MILITIA MAN #1 and #2 lead ZORPE, ELTARK, BENJY, BICKLES and some other ELVES to a seaplane with its engine off.

ZORPE
(into phone)
We nearly froze to death on the
open sea! Does he give a shit?
Whose fault was that?

JASPER (VO)
Look. He bailed me out.

ZORPE
He's fucked us over big time.

JASPER (VO)
They put pressure on him.

The SEAPLANE ENGINE SPUTTERS to life. The PROPELLER NOISE increases.

ZORPE
(yells)
We're heading to the lower 48.
Let's rendezvous...

The propeller drowns him out.

INT. BOX CAR - NIGHT

JASPER puts his phone away and reaches into his knapsack.

He pulls out the Jack-in-the-box. It's nearly finished. He takes out the bedspring and connects it to the inside of the box.

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL/BULL AND BEAR RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is nearly empty. Santa and Dana's table is clear of plates. The wine glasses remain; his empty, hers full.

The MAITRE D' delicately places petite rum babas in front of DANA and SANTA.

MAITRE'D

Our compliments.

Dana refuses hers, which Santa takes and places next to his. He looks up at the Maitre d', winks slovenly, and mimes a pouring motion to indicate more wine, then eats the little pastries.

DANA

Look at you, the picture of health.
It'll be a piece of cake. We've
crafted a bare bones campaign, cut
the fat from the Christmas story.

SANTA

(angry and drunk)
Whaddya mean? Who'sh fat?

DANA

We've gone generic, shooting all
four campaigns at once.

SANTA

Fat's not genetic. Milk and
cookiesh. That'sh what doesh it.

DANA

Let's go over this tomorrow. It's
getting late. You have a 5:30 call
for the shoot in Queens.

SANTA

Sshoot? What sshoot?

DANA

You have to be with me at 5:30 in
the morning.

Santa leans forward over the table.

SANTA

Well, come up to my room and shtay.
That'll guarantee it.

Santa's mouth opens releasing a technicolor tsunami of vomit.

Santa sits back and wipes his face with the tablecloth.

SANTA (CONT'D)
S'cuse me. That last thing... too
fuckin' rich.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The warehouse is nondescript; it could be anywhere. Backpacks lie on the floor near sleeping bags. Empty bottles and cans are strewn about. A fire burns in a gasoline drum in the center of the space.

ELVES squat around the fire eating beans straight out of cans.

ZORPE, ELTARK and BENJY pull various multi-colored tools and instruments from bags and check the equipment, tightening screws, testing batteries. Dials and tiny screens glow.

Some gadgets emit ELECTRONIC BLEEPs.

A freight elevator CLANKS as it ascends. The clanking stops and the DOORS OPEN. JASPER steps out and walks to the fire.

ELTARK
Hey! The party's finally started!

JASPER
Looks like you were doing fine
without me.

Benjy pulls Jasper aside and shows him a duffel bag lying on the floor. BENJY zips it open, revealing a cache of toy weapons— brightly colored Nerf guns, night vision goggles, and drones.

JASPER (CONT'D)
You guys opening a toy store?

ZORPE
We're gonna kidnap the fat bastard
and hold him ransom until we get
our jobs back!

JASPER
(sarcastically)
Well, that's a plan, I guess. Good
luck, boys.

ELTARK
You're not gonna join us? We could
use you Jasper.

JASPER
Gee, I don't know...

ZORPE
I told you he'd been brown nosing
too long to see the light.

JASPER
If I never see the ass hole again,
that'll be too soon. But this shit,
(points to the toys)
the Pole, the factory, it's over.

BICKLES
Jasper's got a point.

ZORPE
Shut up Bickles! What do you know?

BICKLES
I've been through everything you've
been through, Zorpe.

INT. SILVERCUP STUDIOS - DAY

Bustling with activity, gaffers set up lights, set designers and PAs move winter scenery. A DIRECTOR and DP fuss with an overhead camera aimed at a mechanical reindeer.

A PA pulls on a string emerging from the reindeer's butt, making its legs kick out from its body.

Separated from the main area by rows of potted plants is makeup area with directors chairs in front of mirrors on easels.

SANTA sits, very hungover. Buzzing around him is makeup artist, JEROME and hairstylist, SEBASTIAN. Jerome plays with Santa's beard.

JEROME
Eeeeeww! It's got beef stroganoff
in it!

Jerome backs off. Sebastian steps forward with scissors.

SEBASTIAN
That is sooo Chirstmas past.
(beat)
I'm thinking Sean Connery meets
Hamid Karzai.

JEROME

I'm thinking, he gives bulimia a
bad name.

Sebastion starts cutting Santa's beard. A tuft of white beard
hair falls into Santa's lap.

SANTA

(shouts)

What the fuck are you doing?

SEBASTIAN

Snappie! Please! Relax I'm doing
your old ass a huge favor. Chicks
will dig you.

Santa begins to rise in his chair, going red in the face

DANA looking fantastic and energized, strides across the
studio, waving her arms at an assortment of fir trees and
being coated with fake snow by a PA.

DANA

Stop! Stop! Get rid of that crap!
Too season specific.

The PA stops.

Dana walks over to the Director.

DANA (CONT'D)

How the hell is that going to play
in March and July, Tim?

DIRECTOR

Leveraging the brand heritage.
Christmas is winter, honey.

DANA

Santa: He's Christmas. Look at KFC,
they've got the Colonel, who gives
a damn about Kentucky?

DIRECTOR

And the reindeer? People relate to
animals.

DANA

So long as there's no flying. We
can't go there.

DIRECTOR

No, no. It's a Busby Berkeley dance number with glow-in-the-dark antlers and yodeling drag queens.

Dana nods approvingly.

WARDROBE DEPARTMENT

A child actor with a freckled face and gap-tooth smile, SIMPSON REGENT, is at the center of tug-of-war between NINA, a young, hip African-American stylist and DAN REGENT, a middle-aged white man in jeans and sports jacket.

Dan tries to pull off Simpson's vest.

DAN REGENT

This isn't suave! My son's a leading man.

Nina pulls the vest back.

NINA

He's four years-old mister! The color pops on screen.

DAN REGENT

I don't care! It's not good for his career.

Dan rips the vest off, making Simpson cry as DANA appears. Nina stands with her hands on her hips, angry.

NINA

When he's on Santa's knee, he'll glow in every god damn living room in America.

DANA

Gina, he's...

NINA

(interrupting)
It's Nina.

DANA

Whatever. Legal says no Santa/Child contact permitted.

NINA

You're kidding?

Dan pokes his tongue out at Nina while Simpson runs off screaming.

CUT TO:

A camera runs along on dolly track past the Director.

DIRECTOR

Action!

SOUND UP:

Eartha Kitt sings, "Santa Baby, just one more thing" repeated over and over.

MONTAGE:

Santa (with a trimmed beard) on all fours, charges at Simpson dressed as a bullfighter.

Santa in a "pimped up" sleigh decked out in chrome like a low-rider car.

The sleigh bounces ejecting Santa into a kiddie pool swarming with toy sharks, while Simpson dressed as an admiral jumps with joy.

Santa, stripped to the waist and tattooed with "XTREME YULETIDE" across his shoulders in Gothic script, lugs heavy sacks of toys while Simpson throws balls of wrapping paper at Santa.

CUT TO:

An exhausted Santa in his regular clothes walks wearily across the set as it is struck. Lighting rigs turn off with CLICKS and POPS.

Santa walks past the director who is conferring with the DP.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

(to Santa)

Tomorrow, bright and early.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/FRONT DESK - NIGHT

SANTA collects his room key from the CLERK.

CLERK

Your new beard, sir, takes years off. There's mail for you.

SANTA
Have them bring it to the room,
I've lifted enough sacks today.

CLERK
Sacks?

The Clerk hands Santa a postcard.

The postcard image is a tall saguaro cactus; the outstretched arm of the cactus makes an obscene gesture—flipping the bird.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL/ELEVATOR - NIGHT

SANTA rides the elevator, reading crudely handwritten card.

JASPER (VO)
Dear Creep,
For a guy from the top of the
world, you've sunk mighty fuckin'
low. You can put us out. But you
can't keep us down. This time you'd
better watch out!

ZOOM TO:

Postmark on postcard. It reads LAS VEGAS

CUT TO:

MONTAGE of travel images: Plane taking off/Landing SOUND of jet engine roar and TIRES SCREECHING on a runway.

INT. LAS VEGAS AIRPORT - NIGHT

SANTA exits the gate carrying a TIME magazine with his picture and Jasper's mug shot on the cover.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Casino lights sparkle. Traffic runs up and down the Strip. A red Cadillac is singled out in the traffic. The red Cadillac turns into the driveway of the Bellagio past the hotel's signature fountains.

INT. BELLAGIO CASINO - NIGHT

SANTA takes in the action on the casino floor. Throngs surround spinning roulette wheels, hover at blackjack tables etc., all are well heeled and clean cut.

Santa looks up at the ceiling. Surveillance cameras are clustered above gaming tables.

He glances at the Time magazine cover in his hand, taps it with his finger, turns and leaves.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

The red Cadillac pulls up to the curb of a derelict looking street, a glass bottle POPS and CRACKLES under the tires.

SANTA walks through urban blight and rundown stores.

Santa shows various nighttime denizens - HOMELESS, DRUNKS, and PROSTITUTES - the copy of Time. They shake their heads, or shrug or laugh.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - NIGHT

SANTA passes by the pawnshop window. Among the tacky jewelry and rusted musical instruments is the exquisite jack-in-the-box carved and painted by Jasper.

CUT TO:

Through the pawnshop window, in silhouette, Santa talks to the PAWNBROKER.

Santa holds his hand up indicating Jasper's height and the pawnbroker nods. Santa hands the pawnbroker a roll of bills.

INT. BEARDED LADY LOUNGE - NIGHT

A musty dive bar, the checkerboard linoleum floor patched so many times the checks are out of phase.

A tiny stage fills one end of the narrow room. FEDORA, a stripper with big hands and a pronounced Adam's apple, pole dances lethargically.

JASPER stands on a stool to work. SANTA sits on a rickety stool, belly pressed into the well-worn bar. Jasper wipes down a tumbler, fills it with Three Roses whiskey and slides it over.

JASPER

The "for hire" sign said, "No I.D.,
No experience, No top shelf."

SANTA

They had me over a barrel, Jay.

JASPER

Yeah? Homeland Security wants to
deport me. Lucky, they can't find
the fucking North Pole.

I could've used some serious backup, but what happens? I'm fired and labeled a degenerate.

SANTA
They played me for a sucker.

JASPER
You? Who's been making toys for a lifetime to wind up here? Don't come crying to me with your golden parachute. These little pointy ears have heard enough bullshit.

Jasper jumps off the barstool, trots down the bar carrying it and climbs back on the stool to serve another customer. Santa slams his drink back, winces, and smacks the empty glass back on the bar.

SANTA
Gimme another, Jasper.

JASPER
You look like Kenny Rogers in that pussy little beard. Wait your turn!

Santa seethes but holds his tongue.

Jasper takes his time. Sauntering back up the bar dragging the stool to stand on it again and serve Santa.

SANTA
Jasper, I'm really sorry about everything.

Jasper looks at the stripper.

JASPER
Hey, Fedora, come give fatso a lap dance. Tell him what you want done for Christmas.

Fedora mimes scissors snipping.

FEDORA
Hmm. How about a nutcracker, sweetie?

Santa holds his hand up to Fedora to say "no, don't".

JASPER
You don't want her on your lap? What the fuck did you come here for?

SANTA

That card: A very angry gesture,
Jasper.

JASPER

Oh my, you take the cake.

SANTA

I was trying to save Christmas.

JASPER

Excuse me, you mean your stock
options.

SANTA

Who else is in Vegas? Benjy?
Eltark? Zorpe?

JASPER

What's it to you?

SANTA

Nobody's contacted me. I'm worried.

JASPER

We make toys. This is the biggest
playground in the world. Go figure.

SANTA

I'm not happy with the way things
have turned out. Those bastards
have got me working harder than
ever!

Jasper fakes a yawn.

JASPER

None of us believe in you anymore—
just another rich fat white guy
with a little guilt. You lost your
house, your wife, your friends and
made out like a bandit. Jasper
raises an empty glass.

(sarcastically)

Cheers!

Santa stands and begins to leave. Halfway out, he turns.

SANTA

Jasper, if you want to get hold of
me...

JASPER
(interrupts)
You're at the Bellagio.

SANTA
How do you know?

Jasper grins and mimes his fingers like a pistol and shoots Santa. He cocks his finger and blows at the pretend smoke.

INT. SILVERCUP STUDIOS - DAY

A new set is in place, a biplane and a replica of the Empire State building observation deck. An ACTOR in a gorilla suit, the head tucked under his arm, skulks around the set. DANA and the DIRECTOR argue.

DIRECTOR
No fucking way! He's gone AWOL.
That's on you.

DANA fumes. Her phone beeps. She looks at it.

INT. BAUBLE, BUXX, BASH OFFICE - DAY

AUDREY and SAMANTHA, anxious and tense, stand leaning over a small conference table talking at the speakerphone. They cut into each other's sentences.

AUDREY
We checked the Waldorf.

SAMANTHA
His sleigh is still on the roof.

AUDREY
The reindeer are grounded.

SAMANTHA
But he went to the airport.

AUDREY
JFK. He took a yellow cab.

SAMANTHA
So we don't know what airline.

AUDREY
Or where.

INT. TOYZ ON DEMAND! HQ/BOARDROOM - DAY

LARRY, CLAIBORNE and FRANCESCA are in an impromptu meeting.

FRANCESCA

If he's voided his contract it could be the best thing that happened.

CLAIBORNE

Oh, please, it's way too early. We need more from him, than a day's shoot.

LARRY

Let legal look into it. Just to have up our sleeves. But where is he? I don't get it. How can a big fat celebrity just vanish into thin air?

INT. CADILLAC (LAS VEGAS) - DAY

SANTA, looking disheveled, clasps the wheel as he drives. He glances up, hovering over him is a small drone.

He looks at the road then up again. The drone is still there about 20 feet above the car. Its camera aimed at Santa.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

We see the drone's POV on a laptop screen.

The Cadillac is followed much like a police helicopter would track a car chase with BICKLES controlling of the drone.

At the end of the warehouse, ZORPE stands in front of screen running a PowerPoint slide show for a group of ELVES. He uses a straight edge as pointer.

Slide #1. Floor plan of the Bellagio lobby is on screen.

ZORPE

Passenger elevators are here,
service ones in back.

Slide #2 flashes onto the screen. It shows the control panel of the elevator, floors going to 32 and PH.

ZORPE (CONT'D)

Bad news. The top floor buttons are out of reach.

The next slides rush by quickly: Slide #3, clusters of surveillance cameras, Slide #4, motion detectors, Slide #5 laser beams crisscrossing marble floors.

ZORPE (CONT'D)
Nothing we haven't encountered
before with toy delivery. Any
questions?

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - DAY

The Cadillac is stationary at a traffic light. SANTA looks out the window and spies something.

SANTA
(under his breath)
Holy shit. It can't be.

Santa lowers the window and stares out, squinting while the light turns green. Cars behind HONK.

EXT. SHIFTING SANDS WEDDING CHAPEL/DRIVEWAY - DAY

A long horseshoe-shaped driveway leads from the Strip to a gaudily lit chapel perched at the top of a slight rise.

The drive entrance has an arch with a glowing sign, SHIFTING SANDS DRIVE THRU WEDDING CHAPEL, in smaller script beneath this, reads SPECIALISING IN SECOND, THIRD AND BEYOND MARRIAGES.

The drive exit's arch sign says, DESERT STORM LIGHTNING ANNULMENTS. The Desert Storm offices occupy the other side of the chapel.

SANTA hits the gas. The Cadillac scoots across three lanes of traffic. Oncoming cars brake, dodge and accelerate to avoid him. The Cadillac SCRAPES its rear, as it enters the driveway under the Shifting Sands sign.

EXT. SHIFTING SANDS WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY

At the top of the drive, MRS. CLAUS in simple white dress and OLAF in a Hawaiian shirt stand holding hands and talking to a celebrant dressed as ELVIS. Santa SCREECHES to a halt just in front of them, jumps out and rushes at the couple.

MRS. CLAUS
Nicki, so nice to see you! I can't
believe you came. We didn't even
send any invitations.

Mrs. Claus remains calm, Santa fumes and Olaf bristles.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)
This is Olaf, my new husband. Olaf
this is Nicholas, my ex.

SANTA

Hilda! You can't do this! We need to talk.

MRS. CLAUS

Not in Nevada we don't. We must get going. The elves are throwing us a party. I can't say where, it's supposed to be a surprise.

Mrs. Claus and Olaf turn towards a gleaming convertible.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

Then we head to Olaf's ship. It's coming through the Panama Canal. We're going trawling around the South Pacific for our honeymoon.

Mrs. Claus and Olaf step toward their car.

SANTA

But, Hilda, the whole Toyz On Demand! deal: I did it for us.

Mrs. Claus turns back her head to Santa

MRS. CLAUS

It may have started that way... but once the magic's gone, you can't get it back.

SANTA

You never gave me a chance!

Mrs. Claus turns fully around and walks back to Santa. Olaf gets in the convertible and STARTS THE ENGINE.

MRS. CLAUS

I call a hundred years a chance, don't you?

Mrs. Claus reaches into her handbag and pulls out a yellow envelope.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

Here, I almost forgot, your copy of the divorce.

Mrs. Claus hands it to Santa as Olaf brings the convertible beside Mrs Claus. She hops in over the side.

Olaf and Mrs. Claus drive off. JUST REMARRIED is written across trunk in shaving cream.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE of gambling images. Roulette wheels spin, dice roll and slot machine icons tumble. As the slot machine icons slow, we see holly, snowflakes, and reindeer. They drop into place as menacing, snarling elves.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BELLAGIO/SUITE - NIGHT

SANTA bolts upright in his bed; eyes wide open, beads of sweat on his brow. He looks around, disoriented and reaches for the switch on the lamp on the night stand.

INT. PARIS CASINO, EIFFEL TOWER OBSERVATION DECK - NIGHT

In the crosshairs in a zoom lens, a light goes on in a window on the top floor of the Bellagio Hotel. The lens sharpens its focus and we see Santa in bed picking up the hotel phone.

ELTARK wearing headphones, earpieces behind his ears in "disengaged mode", stands at a small window on the observation deck looking through a camera with a long lens.

In front of Eltark is a tripod is a laser pointer and laser microphone. He presses a button on the laser pointer, its tip glows red. He slides headphones over his ears and looks through the lens again.

CUT TO:

Through the lens we see a small red dot appear on the window of Santa's room. Santa is on the phone, talking. We hear Santa's conversation through Eltark's earphones.

SANTA
(slightly distorted)
Yes. A steak, with bearnaise sauce
on the side. And a bottle of
scotch.

ROOM SERVICE (VO)
Very good.

ELTARK
(quietly)
So fucking predictable.

Eltark lowers his camera and raises his phone to his lips.

ELTARK (CONT'D)

Right boys, you have 15 minutes.
Go!

INT. BELLAGIO/BANQUET HALL

NIGHT

Norwegian folk music plays as MRS. CLAUS and OLAF waltz on a parquet dance floor surrounded by partying ELVES.

Near a half-eaten wedding cake on a banquet table at the back of the hall, BENJY, ZORPE, BICKLES and ELVES 1 and 2 make a discreet exit.

INT. BELLAGIO/CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A tall hotel room service waiter pushing a large silver domed room service cart exits the service elevator. A few guests pass by without paying the waiter any attention.

The waiter wobbles down the corridor, we see he is really two elves inside one tall waiter's uniform. ZORPE's face pops out of the top of the jacket while BENJY's hands emerge from below, pushing the service cart.

In front of the door of a luxury suite, ZORPE turns his head and looks down the corridor. Coming from the other direction is a housekeeping laundry cart, pushed by ELVES 1 and 2, dressed as a single tall housekeeper.

Benjy's hand KNOCKS.

ZORPE

(altered voice)

Room service!

INT.

BELLAGIO SUITE

NIGHT

SANTA sits in an arm chair preoccupied with the TV remote. He motions for the room service cart to be left in the middle of the room. He seems.

ZORPE

(altered voice)

Don't you want to open it?

SANTA

Where's my scotch?

ZORPE

Ah, it's coming. We, um, had to restock... Really you should open the lid.

SANTA

Hmpff. I like my scotch first. An
aperitif.

ZORPE

But your dinner will get cold, sir.

SANTA

(a little exasperated)
Whatever, serve it.

Santa waves dismissively.

ZORPE

Come closer, so you can smell it.
It's delicious.

Santa rolls his eyes.

SANTA

(under his breath)
Where do they get these clowns?

He gets up out of the chair and approaches the service cart.

SANTA (CONT'D)

If you insist...

As Santa nears the service cart, Benjy's arm reaches out and
flips open the lid. A brilliant flash POPS, blinding Santa.

BICKLES lies on his back on the service cart with dark
goggles on. In his hand is a camera flash.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ!

Santa stumbles and falls on the floor as the elves quickly
break out of the waiter uniform. Bickles jumps off the
service cart.

The elves pull rope and masking tape from their pockets and
work quickly to gag and tie up the blinded Santa.

Another KNOCK is heard at the door. The two elves dressed as
in a single housekeeping uniform enter with the laundry cart.

With great effort ZORPE, BENJY and BICKLES hoist the bound
and gagged Santa into the laundry cart.

They strip the bed and pile the sheets into the cart,
muffling the GRUNTING noises Santa is making.

The cart is pushed out of the room by the "housekeeping" elves, its canvas sides reveal the struggling Santa inside. The housekeeper turns right and proceeds down the corridor.

BENJY, ZORPE and BICKLES turn left and walk casually away.

INT. BELLAGIO/ BASEMENT LOADING BAY - NIGHT

The service elevator opens onto a ramp skirted by a railing. Beyond the railing is the parking area for delivery trucks. The ramp runs downhill and forks in two. Each branch runs to a loading bay.

An unmarked white van parks in the right bay, its tailgate flush with the ramp and its rolling cargo door is up.

A grey van, with the logo of "Cleaned Out - Hotel and Casino Laundry" idles in the left bay. It too has the rear cargo door open.

The service elevator door opens and "the housekeeper" pushes the bulging canvas laundry cart onto the ramp it picks up speed as it descends.

The housekeeper has a difficulty keeping up, the little outstretched arms poking out from under the jacket struggle to keep a grip.

The bottom elf scurries and the elf on top loses balance. The "housekeeper" splits in half, the top elf tumbles off and the bottom elf gets caught up in his uniform.

The cart breaks free and speeds off down the ramp.

The cart hits the railing at the fork in the ramp, bounces to the left and shoots into the "Cleaned Out" laundry van. The tailgate of the van ROLLS DOWN and SLAMS shut. The van REVS UP and heads toward the exit.

The elves fall into the right loading bay. They pick themselves up and run to the white van.

They both clamber into the driver's seat.

ELF #1
You do pedals.

ELF #1 stands on the seat holding the steering wheel and ELF #2 kneels on the floor pressing the pedals with his hands.

The white van lurches, SQUEALING as it turns. It speeds after the grey van, as if driven by a drunk driver.

The grey van heads out a boom gate which closes behind it.

EXT. BELLAGIO/SERVICE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

ELTARK, ZORPE, BENJY and BICKLES are standing near the garage exit. The "Cleaned Out" van passes them by and gently turns onto the street.

A few beats.

The white van roars up the drive and CRASHES through the gate, careens onto the street out of control.

ELTARK
Holy shit!

The elves chase after the white van.

ELVES
(all scream)
Stop!

EXT. CLEANED OUT HOTEL & CASINO LAUNDRY - NIGHT

SANTA stands in front of the big industrial space in his pajamas. His red Cadillac pulls up, driven by a hotel valet.

INT. CADILLAC (LAS VEGAS) - NIGHT

Santa drives down the Strip, past casinos and patches of desert, the neon splashing color across his windshield. The car radio PLAYS Chet Baker's EVERYTIME WE SAY GOODBYE. Santa starts to cry. He changes radio stations, landing on the local hip-hop channel.

RADIO ANNOUNCER 1 (VO)
Yo! Tonight the one and only place
to be: the Hard Rock, super star
rapper, Mad Ass Evah, on his Uzit
or Luzit tour.

RADIO ANNOUNCER 2 (VO)
Sold out! No doubt! Not even Mad
Ass's own mother can get a ticket!

RADIO ANNOUNCER 3 (VO)
Check this. Word is: Don King's
gonna throw the Ceasar's fight so
he can leave early an' get his butt
to the Hard Rock to catch Mad Ass.

Santa heaves the steering wheel and swings the caddy across the oncoming traffic into the Hard Rock Casino entrance, past a giant billboard reading: 2 NITE MAD ASS EVAH DA UZIT OR LUZIT TOUR.

EXT. HARD ROCK THEATER/STAGE DOOR - NIGHT

A large, mostly Black crowd of fans has gathered at the door, which is protected by big Black security guards.

THUMPING DEEP BASS can be heard as the building pulses.

SANTA pushes his way through the crowd, who do not appreciate his efforts.

CROWD MEMBER 1

Yo, Kenny Rogers, you in the wrong place.

CROWD MEMBER 2

Hey Alzheimers! The tables are that way.

A giant stretch SUV limo pulls up and the crowd goes wild.

The limo door opens and MAD ASS emerges with his ENTOURAGE. Security clears a path to the stage door letting Mad Ass catch sight of Santa.

MAD ASS

Ho! Ho! Ho! Whassup S.C.!

Mad Ass approaches Santa and hugs him, silencing the crowd.

INT. HARD ROCK THEATER/BACKSTAGE NIGHT

Gorgeous women in skin tones of café au lait to dark chocolate amble by as SANTA follows MAD ASS to a big self-service bar near a lounge area.

MAD ASS

Help yourself. You look like you need a drink. Take a break from the tables, Pops.

SANTA

That's the least of my problems. Everything has turned to shit. I'm like king Midas, but with shit, not gold. The Elves are after me. They're here in Vegas!

MAD ASS

Stay right here. Nobody's gonna go Tu-Pac on your ass. We'll talk after the show.

(to passing beauty,

CAYENNE)

Cayenne, take care of Mr. Claus.

Cayenne winks at Mad Ass and takes Santa by the hand. Santa's mood lifts.

INT. DANA BUXX'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Covered in bubbles, DANA soaks in her lavish pink marble bathtub, her matching pink phone to her ear.

DANA
Santa's with Mad Ass in Vegas?
Shit. Have they been photographed
together?

A big bubble floats over Dana's head and POPS.

INT. HARD ROCK THEATER/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

WILD APPLAUSE is heard from outside the backstage area. Santa sits on a sofa with Cayenne. Security guards wearing headsets, clear a path through the hangers on.

As the applause continues, Mad Ass addresses the crowd off screen.

MAD ASS (VO)
Goodnight Las Vegas!

Mad Ass and his entourage pass through the backstage area like a tornado, sweeping up Santa and Cayenne with them.

The sofa and bar are empty.

INT. TOYZ ON DEMAND! CORPORATE JET - NIGHT

LARRY sits in a large swivel chair in the comfortably appointed cabin. A golf bag holding a set of clubs is buckled into the chair nearest to him.

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT walks down the cabin and leans over Larry.

LARRY
We're making a detour. Tell the
pilot we're stopping in Vegas.

EXT. TOYZ ON DEMAND! CORPORATE JET - NIGHT

The plane painted in the Toyz On Demand! colors with the logo on the tail, banks in the sky and turns behind some clouds.

INT. GRAND CANAL VENENITIAN CASINO - NIGHT

WOMEN GIGGLE and GLASSES TINKLE, WATER LAPS and slow R'N'B MUSIC plays softly.

Mad Ass's ENTOURAGE lounges by the Grand Canal and in gondolas floating up and down, partying in a low-key way.

MAD ASS sits in a gondola smoking a big cigar with SANTA holding a glass of Scotch. The gondola is low in the water.

The GONDOLIER mops his brow and pushes Mad Ass and Santa beneath the Bridge of Sighs.

SANTA

Do you think about your retirement,
Mad Ass?

MAD ASS

Me? Got my own label, my clothing
line, movie production company and
a chain of restaurants. Now , I'm
thinking hotels.

In the distance a SMALL FIGURE stands at the water's edge lowering something into the canal. Oblivious, Mad Ass puffs on his cigar.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)

You oughta take your cash and do
something out here. Parlay it some.
Vegas is your kind of town. I can
tell.

Santa looks up the canal, sees the small figure and is troubled. DISTURBING MUSIC builds.

SANTA

(distracted)

Uh ha. Yes. Lit end to end like a
Christmas tree and the days and
nights last forever.

MAD ASS

Anybody's who's anybody ends up
here. Started by gangsters; it'll
be finished by gangstas.
(chuckles)

At a distance, a ripple comes toward the gondola at high speed.

Mad Ass is unaware of the ripple and calmly puffs his cigar.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)

Paris, New York, Egypt and Venice,
but it's missing something...
something real chill.

Santa stands up to get a better view, he holds his hand over his eyes, peering. The gondola rocks. The ripple is like the bow wave of a miniature torpedo.

The DISTURBING MUSIC grows LOUD.

SANTA
(panicked)
Shit! The elves are torpedoing us.
(yells at the gondolier)
Get us out of here!

The "torpedo" adjusts its course, locking onto the gondola.

When the "torpedo" is a few yards from the gondola, Santa takes a deep breath and leaps overboard.

The gondola, rocks violently, water comes in over the side. Only the deft work of the gondolier prevents it capsizing.

Santa swims as fast as he can away from the gondola.

The "torpedo" bumps into the side of the gondola. It stays there, repeatedly bumping into the side of the boat like a puppy seeking its mother's teat. Mad Ass looks over the side at the semi-submerged missile.

MAD ASS
You paranoid motherfucker! That's
Lil M.A.'s submarine. He always
greet me when I come off work.

Mad Ass reaches over the side, picks up the toy submarine rotates it and aims it back at the end of the canal.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)
What the hell are you thinking? All
the world's toys have turned
against you?

Mad Ass waves to his son, LIL MA, the small figure at the end of the canal.

The gondolier pushes the boat toward Santa then holds the pole out to him and helps him back on board.

Mad Ass removes his sweatshirt and hands it to Santa who wraps himself in it.

SANTA
Guess I'm a little jumpy. Got
something to take the edge of?

MAD ASS
Have you tried sleep?

INT. BELLAGIO/SUITE - DAY

SANTA sprawls naked across the bed, fast asleep. The curtains are drawn, light creeps around their edges. Above him the air conditioner vent HISSES. Little silver vapor trails of cold air swirl around him, up and over his body, tickling him.

A vapor trail enters his nose. Floating like a magic carpet.

We follow the vapor trail up Santa's nostril. It enters a dark, hairy, red cavern.

Up, up, the vapor trail goes, through red passages that begin to THROB.

FADE TO RED:

Snowflakes appear and dance on the red background. Swirling and turning like cogs in clockwork. The snowflakes become cogs, the cogs become machines and the machines RESOLVE into Santa's workshop.

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP DREAMSCAPE - DAY

The workshop is a grotesque scene. A conveyor belt made of Kid-E-Kredit cards transports weird misshapen toys; odd hybrids with the heads of familiar characters, LARRY, DANA, MRS CLAUS, JASPER and MAD ASS stuck on top of the bodies of dolls, stuffed animals and toy trains.

As each of the hybrid character/toys reaches screen center, its head rotates 360 degrees and speaks.

LARRY TOY
You've got to distance yourself
completely.

DANA TOY
Roll Christmas out quarterly, baby.

JASPER TOY
You really fucked us over, Mr.
Claus.

MRS.CLAUS TOY
Once the magic's gone, you can't
get it back.

MAD ASS TOY
Missing something real chill.

The conveyor belt dumps all the characters into the trunk of New York taxi, driven by the CABBIE from Times Square.

INT. TAXI DREAMSCAPE - DAY

The cab drives through a melting Polar landscape, past icebergs and Santa's antique sleigh with two sea lions on it playing pat-a-cake.

The Cabbie adjusts the AC to MAXIMUM CHILL, then his head rotates 180 degrees.

CABBIE

The North Pole eh? Shoulda seen that coming. That's double the meter. Or would you like to take a spin? Double or nothing?

The taximeter is a slot machine. It tumbles over, spinning various Christmas icons, holly, reindeer, elves, presents, before stopping at a row of three of Santa's castles. A river of money pours out.

CABBIE (CONT'D)

Well, ho the fuck, ho, ho. All your Christmases have come at once!! Just what everybody wants.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BELLAGIO/SUITE - DAY

SANTA lies on his bed, still asleep his mouth moving.

SANTA

(murmuring)

What everybody wants...

Santa slowly opens his eyes. He blinks.

INT. THE BEARDED LADY LOUNGE - DAY

JASPER is tending the bar while BENJY, ELTARK, BICKLES and ZORPE perch on bar stools.

ZOPRE

Jasper we fucked up...

JASPER

What am I supposed to do about it?

Two very large black men in suits enter the bar, members of Mad Ass's security detail.

BODYGUARD 1
Which one of you is the elf?

The elves seated at the counter murmur.

ELVES
(all except Jasper.)
No, No, No,... We're not elves.

The bodyguards walk up to the bar. They look directly at Jasper.

BODYGUARD 2
Mad Ass would like to see you.

EXT. MAD ASS'S PENTHOUSE POOL DECK - DAY

Mad Ass's logo is on everything, from the lavender deck chairs to the bottom of the pool.

LARRY and SANTA sit in chairs around a low coffee table with a large art glass object at its center. They look extremely uncomfortable and are avoiding eye contact.

MAD ASS in purple swim trunks and white sunglasses mixes drinks at the extensive bottle service laid out on the outdoor credenza.

MAD ASS
Larry, an extra dash of Peychaud's
bitters, for you, my man?

Mad Ass brings the drinks over and hands them to Larry and Santa.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)
I like mixing. But I don't drink no
more.
(smiles)
Occupational hazard.

Mad Ass makes himself comfortable on the sofa opposite them.

LARRY
There's a lot at stake. I'm hoping
you can convince Mr. Claus to get
back on board.

SANTA
Go fuck yourself, Larry.

MAD ASS
Something you should both know.

A blimp with Mad Ass's logo drifts across the sky.

Remember how the Toyz On Demand
stock dropped like a stone – before
the bounce?

Santa nods.

LARRY

Who could forget! I lost my god
damn shirt!

MAD ASS

Until some mystery buyer showed up,
And bought Toyz shares like
hotcakes, right? And supported the
share price.

Larry nods.

CUT TO:

INT. MAD ASS'S LIMO - DAY

MAD ASS in the back seat watches JASPER with his knapsack
walk over train tracks to a graffiti covered boxcar and
clamber in.

Mad Ass returns his attention to the action on the computer
screens along the divider.

MAD ASS

(into phone)

Okay. We're done shortin'. Time to
go long. Grab every Toyz share your
ass can find.

DISOLVE TO:

EXT. MAD ASS'S PENTHOUSE POOL DECK - DAY

MAD ASS smiles.

MAD ASS

"Buy when there's blood in the
streets!" Ha! My favorite investing
tip! Baron Rothschild. Spoken like
a true gangsta!

LARRY and SANTA both take a large gulp of their drinks.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)

Together with my other holdings, I
now have the majority stake in Toyz
On Demand!

(beat)

And gentlemen, I ain't happy with
the what the company is doing.

LARRY

(spits out drink)

You? What on earth do you know
about toys?

SANTA

Mad Ass, there's no way in hell I
can do Christmas once a quarter!
It's insane.

MAD ASS

Relax. Both of you. See all this?

Mad Ass sweeps his arm to show off his logo-encrusted empire.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)

The music industry as we knew it:
Dead for years. Kids don't buy
music. But I'm on the top of the
heap. And growing? Why's that?

Mad Ass's BODYGUARDS walk through the door from the penthouse
with JASPER.

Santa stands up, looks angrily at Jasper, and takes a step
forward. BODYGUARD #1 moves in front of Jasper. Santa sits
back down again.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)

Here's the deal. Instead of Toyz On
Demand with some bullshit campaign
we are going to have Christmas On
Demand!

Mad Ass looks around to see if his message has sunk in. But
the others look puzzled.

MAD ASS (CONT'D)

Why do something every 3 months
when you can do it whenever? Twenty
Four-Seven-Three Sixty Five. That's
what I'm sayin'!

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

A swarm of media gather on the sidewalk around a small podium. On the podium, standing in front of LARRY, between SANTA and MAD ASS, LIL' MA pushes the plunger on a detonator box with Mad Ass's logo on it.

We see an old casino implode in a massive explosion (a la the old Aladdin). Clouds of dust rise.

The dust dissolves into a MONTAGE of building construction: Backhoes digging; trucks pouring concrete; steel girders being erected; welding; cranes swinging in the air... The construction montage gives way to images of teams of elves working: creating new giant-sized toys; fitting together carousel horses; programming robotic reindeer; assembling, painting and polishing...

FADE TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS (AERIAL VIEW) - DAY (SUNSET)

Across the Vegas strip, the Eiffel Tower gleams, the skyline of New York, New York glitters, the pyramid of the Luxor looms and the canals of the Venetian glisten. But larger and brighter than them all is a giant iceberg glistening like an enormous diamond, dozens of stories high.

EXT. NORTH POLE CASINO - DAY (SUNSET)

From the tip of the iceberg, made of glass, we peer down inside. Encased in the Iceberg is replica of Santa's Castle. Animatronic reindeer skate around a frozen moat lining the iceberg.

INT. NORTH POLE CASINO/GAMING FLOOR - NIGHT

The gaming room is a giant Christmas-themed carnival.

Performing seals spin giant Christmas ornaments on their noses on ice floes. Hundreds of Christmas trees are decorating with glowing dice; slot machines with candy cane levers; ELVES are croupiers to happy gamblers getting plied with eggnog by leggy waitresses dressed as toy soldiers.

PIPED MUSIC PLAYS, "We wish you a Merry Christmas, We wish a Merry Christmas, We wish you a Merry Christmas, Every day of the year."

High in the air fireworks explode, becoming luminous snowflakes, suspended like skywriting, spelling out: MAD ASS EVAH LIVE IN THE MISSLETOE ARENA.

EXT. NORWEGIAN FISHING VESSEL - NIGHT

Under a bright moon and stars, OLAF and (the former) MRS. CLAUS sit on deck chairs at the stern drinking cocktails from plastic cups.

On the deck is a small TV showing MAD ASS performing at the North Pole Casino.

MRS CLAUS

A nice place to get married but
who'd want to retire there?

INT. NORTH POLE CASINO/SANTA'S CASTLE - NIGHT

JASPER ascends a winding staircase towards a grand wooden door, the Jack-in-the box is tucked under his arm. He reaches the door and lifts a big doorknocker.

INT. NORTH POLE CASINO/SANTA'S TURRET - NIGHT

SANTA sits his golden throne, on his left thigh is blonde showgirl, on his right, a Black showgirl. The showgirls wearing little reindeer horns feed Santa milk and cookies.

Jasper walks up to Santa and pops opens the Jack-in-the-box.

An elfin Jack jumps out, startling the showgirls, who giggle.

The Jack's hand holds a piece of paper. Santa takes the paper from the Jack's hand.

Santa peers down at the paper holding it at arms' length.

It's a printout, with two sets of eight digit numbers on it.

LEFT SIDE READS

Money Taken. \$10,987,216

RIGHT SIDE READS

Money Given. \$11,000,000

SANTA

Jasper, we're paying out more than
we're taking in.

(beat)

Merry Christmas! Ho! Ho! Ho!

FADE OUT.

THE END