

HIGH ON CHRISTMAS

Written by

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Valparaiso Pictures

FADE IN

Do us a favor and Google MAJOR LAZER's "Christmas Trees". Because that's what plays over...

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

BEGIN CREDITS:

This is suburbia at its bougie-est. The halls are decked with A LOT of shit. This is a family that takes Christmas seriously.

We track with TOM MERCER (40s, a little winter scruff, hint of a college tattoo that's been lasered away) through a living room that's like a showroom designed by elves. Meticulous lights strung. Not a tinsel out of place. No expense spared. He hangs a final STOCKING: "Lily".

In walks LEAH MERCER (40's, maiden name Mandelbaum, type A and not hiding it). Eyes glued to her phone, she is POSTMATING a Christmas Eve Feast. She gives Tom a kiss. He smiles and walks out.

Once the room is clear, Leah "fixes" the stocking. He didn't do it her way. And her way is the right way.

Back with Tom, he passes through the TV room where their youngest daughter LILY (7, mean girl in the making) roasts marshmallows over a high-end electric fireplace. Kardashian Christmas special in the background.

Tom continues past a flawless tree with a mountain of perfectly-wrapped presents beneath, down a hallway with framed family photos of past matching-sweater Christmases and outside to--

EXT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - CONTINUOUS

A guy in a TASKRABBIT t-shirt laughs hard at his own joke-- it's a carrot sticking out of the "crotch" of an expertly-constructed SNOWMAN. Taskrabbit clocks Tom and reassigns the carrot to its face.

Tom grins. Looks up at the house. Bright Christmas lights shine onto their faces.

TOM

Thanks, man. Fixing our lights on
Christmas Eve. Sure you got better
things to do.

WIDE on the outside of the Mercer house. With the amount of electricity they're pumping, they could run NYC's power grid for a year. Animatronic elves hammer toys. A suspended sleigh-in-flight rainbows the roof. MERRY CHRISTMAS is displayed in nine languages. Task Rabbit eyes the display.

TASK RABBIT

You guys sure are "woke", huh?

TOM

What? Yeah, I don't think anyone's sleeping yet.

Task Rabbit shakes his head. Tom further examines the handiwork.

TOM (CONT'D)

Novalink 8 millimeter?

Task Rabbit looks impressed.

TOM (CONT'D)

With the Dewenwils waterproof light timer?

TASK RABBIT

(surprised)

Wow- you know more about this than I did. Honestly, I just watched a YouTube video.

He packs up his toolbox.

TASK RABBIT (CONT'D)

Seems like you didn't need me.

Tom shrugs.

TOM

Well, obviously I got it wrong the first time so-- the wife thought I did. And you know what they say, happy wife... get laid on Christmas.

Task Rabbit looks uncomfortable. Too much information.

Tom opens the Task Rabbit APP. Adds a handsome tip.

TOM (CONT'D)

All set! Merry Christmas.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN

Tom walks in, wrapping an apron around himself. It says "HAPPY HOLLANDAISE."

Leah enters. Before she can start, Tom--

TOM

Listen-- you can Saucey the
booze... And Task Rabbit the
lights... And Amazon Prime the
presents... But come on, it's
Christmas. I can bake cookies.
Right?

He waits for her approval. After a beat of consternation, she smiles.

LEAH

Okay.

She slaps his butt. He smiles and pops open the flour.

LEAH (CONT'D)

But picture time in 10.

Tom seductively slides the apron aside to reveal an ugly reindeer sweater- this one says VIXEN.

Leah flashes her own: BLITZEN. The BASS of that Major Lazer song is cranking. Leah glances to the ceiling.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - HARPER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

HARPER (17, hippie in the making, definitely has plans that involve Burning Man) jams out to this song we've been enjoying. She's with her boyfriend HAWK (17, hair like young Jared Leto, has already built their portable shower for Burning Man) who takes a long hit off of a VAPE PEN.

With a small rake, Harper designs a spiral in a mini desk ZEN GARDEN. It's basically a fancy box of sand.

Little hippies in training.

Outside the door, Leah starts calling:

LEAH

Harper, time for the family ph--

She opens the door just as the BASS DROPS, rattling a jewelry box off a nightstand. It cracks open, spilling ethical, vegan, fair trade condoms across the floor.

Beat. Hawk turns off the Major Lazer. Slyly pockets the vape.

END CREDITS

LEAH (CONT'D)
You're not in this one.

Leah checks her watch.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Time to go home. I'm SURE we'll see
you tomorrow.

Harper huffs.

HARPER
It's time you accept that Hawk is
part of this flock.

LEAH
So we're all about Jesus now?

HARPER
You're being too literal. When I
say flock, I mean family. Hawk--
bird-- it's figurative. Get it?

LEAH
I get that I've known Harold since
he was five and into doing the
Soulja Boy.

Leah flaps her arms wildly, attempting the dance.

From the hall-- Tom, with flour on his face and the camera
around his neck, watches Leah dance, unbeknownst to her.

TOM
And what do we have here?

Leah freezes, arms drop to her sides.

TOM (CONT'D)
I was just about to join in. It
looked good.

Hawk stands, gathering his hemp backpack.

HAWK
It's ok, Sparrow.

He pecks her cheek.

HAWK (CONT'D)
I'm not taking photos anymore.

Nods to her parents.

HAWK (CONT'D)
(in parting)
Steals your soul.

Beat.

TOM
(steamrolling that)
So.. ok, picture time.

A FLASH OF WHITE takes us to...

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM

The family (Tom, Leah, Lily and Harper) huddles around the small viewscreen of a DSLR. Lily snatches it, pumping the buttons to ZOOM in.

LILY
Oh my god, no no no no.

LEAH
What is it this time? Didn't hit
your angles?

LILY
Yeah, exactly. Can you say muffin
top?

Lily grabs at her non-existent side fat.

LEAH
Not to a seven-year-old, I can't.

Before Lily throws another inevitable fit, Tom distracts.

TOM
Time for presents!

Lily scrambles toward the tree.

TOM (CONT'D)
Just one this year!

Harper picks up a box then immediately drops it. Heavy.

A loud RESOUNDING GONG emanates from within. Her face explodes into a grin: she may be a hippie, but she still loves *things*. Especially expensive ones.

Tearing into the box confirms her suspicion: A SHINY SET OF BRASS SINGING BOWLS.

HARPER

I can't believe you got these!

She flips over the bowl. ANGLE ON: Made in Taiwan sticker.

Harper eyes her mom with disappointment.

HARPER (CONT'D)

What have I told you about child labor practices? Your iPhone isn't worth their mangled fingers.

A family tiff is interrupted by A LOUD BIRD SQUAWK emanating from Harper's iPhone. She answers, heads out of the room.

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

(obviously to Hawk)

Yeah, but they're from Taiwan. I know, right...

Tom shrugs to Leah.

TOM

Up next.

He drumrolls on the coffee table with his fingers.

LEAH

(interrupting his announcement)

You!

Tom is giddy. Jeez, he loves Christmas.

He paces back and forth. Shaking presents. Leah hands one to him.

LEAH (CONT'D)

This one.

He rips open the paper and tosses it.

Leah gathers it from the floor. Tom doesn't notice, because in the box is a BRAND-NEW CAMERA.

LEAH (CONT'D)

I called in a favor. We did their ad campaign last year. My pitch, no big deal. Anyway, nobody in the States has one of these yet. I don't even think the instruction booklet's in English, so... good luck, honey!

But a frustrated ball of energy named Lily is tired of waiting.

LILY

Good, good. He got a camera. You know iPhone has portrait mode, right?

Lily shakes her head.

Tom and Leah share a look: she'll grow out of it. Hopefully.

LILY (CONT'D)

Alright.

Lily heads for the largest box under the tree.

TOM

You sure you want that one?

Lily about faces, whipping around.

LILY

No.

Leah, having snuck out of the room, appears behind Lily, a long Burberry plaid leash in her hand...

LEAH

(quietly)

Lily.

Lily warily peeks over her shoulder. Spots the leash.

Faster than physics allows, she's now cuddling...

A BENGAL CAT

LEAH (CONT'D)

She was hard to find, but we knew this is what you really wanted.

Lily lifts the tail, picks up a paw up, inspecting it like a Westminster judge.

Leah and Tom share an uneasy glance: will she blow?

LILY
(trying to be calm)
She's not a "blue," is she?

Tom leaps to his feet, quickly covering.

TOM
No, but she's a "snow" which is--

LILY
Not a "blue". Might as well be a
stinky gerbil.

Tom hangs his head in shame: snarked by a 7-year-old.

The CAT purrs, headbutting Lily's hand. Pet me.

Lily exhales and relents, scratching the cat's ear.

LILY (CONT'D)
(still a little
disappointed)
I guess she'll do. You said a
"snow", right?

Leah and Tom vigorously shakes their heads "yes".

She lifts the cat, staring it in the eyes.

LILY (CONT'D)
I'll call her Gucci.

Harper pops her head into the room.

HARPER
Perfect for a thing that came from
a sweat shop.

Another round of bickering is blessedly cut short by a PHONE:
Mariah Carey's ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS YOU ringtone.

Leah stares down at the ringing phone. The ID reads: SASHA.

The phone keeps ringing. Tom joins, staring down.

TOM
You gotta jump on that grenade. It
is Christmas Eve.

With one more YOUEEEEEE, Leah hits the green button.

LEAH
Hey sis. Merry Christmas.

CUT TO:

INT. JFK CUSTOMS - SECURITY CORDON - LEO ROOM

SASHA ROCKEFELLER (also previously Mandelbaum, 35, bleached-blonde dreads, a batik jumpsuit, a cacophony of bracelets on her arms and a definite disdain for authority) is flanked by the things she hates the most...

SASHA
The fuzz. They got me. On a stupid goathide drum. I was--

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

LEAH
Where are you?

SASHA
At the airport.

LEAH
(dreading)
So when you say "fuzz", you mean
TSA.
(sigh)
Which airport?

SASHA
The man's the man. In a blue hat. A
red hat. A black hat. Doesn't
matter. It's all the same man.
Trying to keep us down. Trying to
keep this goat from fulfilling its
destiny--

LEAH
As a drum?

SASHA
Yes, Leah. As a drum for a family
in Scarsdale. You didn't know this
goat. I did. We went into a sweat
lodge and our spirits--

LEAH
(nervous)
Sasha, which airport?

Beat.

SASHA
Surpriiiiiii---

Her vocalization continues...

EXT. JFK INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL - NIGHT

SASHA
---iiise!

Outside the terminal, Sasha and Leah share a big hug. Sasha far more invested.

INT. VOLVO SUV - NIGHT

Leah stares dead ahead as she grips the wheel. It's not a night to be on the road: snow piles along the highway.

SASHA
--and then they all got sick. They said it was my fault. Honestly I don't know what they were talking about. What am I supposed to clean a Wahoo in? The toilet?

LEAH
A Wahoo? Where were you?

SASHA
I told you. Haiti. We-Aid were in-country for the third time.

LEAH
There's got to be a better name than We Aid.

SASHA
But that's what we do. We Aid.

LEAH
Haiti? Aids? C'mon, I'm offering my firm's services for free. I wish you would just listen to me more.

SASHA
A Wahoo is a fish.

Outside the windows, it's a lot less highway and a lot more suburban Scarsdale.

After a long silence--

LEAH

So, what are you really doing here?
Did you burn through the
Vanderbilt's alimony?

SASHA

Rockefeller. And no. I was just
going to surprise you.

Beat.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Guess I forgot how much you hate
surprises.

Leah sighs.

LEAH

No, I'm glad you're here. Just
didn't plan for it. The girls will
be really happy to see you.

Leah slows the car as if somehow she can stop the inevitable.
With a deep breath, she launches into--

LEAH (CONT'D)

Speaking of... ground rules. No
weird men.

SASHA

How do you define--

LEAH

No men. No sweat lodges in the
garage. No sound baths. No impromptu
tribal piercings. How about no
fires? And... definitely NO DRUGS.

With that, the Volvo slowly rumbles into the driveway.

LEAH (CONT'D)

You hear me, right?

SASHA

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN

Sasha makes a double-rum egg nog for herself. Leah clocks it.

SASHA

What? This wasn't on your "naughty
list".

Tom's voice comes into the room before he does.

TOM (O.S.)
What'd you break this time?

She takes another sip.

SASHA
(yelling back)
It wasn't broken. It just made
everyone violently ill.

Tom enters and throws an arm around his sister-in-law.

TOM
That's our Sasha.

Sasha's trying to cover but we can see she's not happy with what went down in Haiti. Not her finest moment.

SASHA
(sotto, ashamed)
Yep, that's me.

Her hidden sadness is snapped by the arrival of the girls.

LILY AND HARPER
AUNT SASHA!

They pile into one group hug. Lily backs away, crinkling her nose.

LILY
You smell. Like bad.

Sasha eyes Lily.

SASHA
Well, I was going to wait until
tomorrow--

LILY
No-- you should take one NOW.

SASHA
...but I think you need this gift
as soon as possible.

She reaches into her hobo sling bag-- digs around. Leah and Tom look nervous.

She takes out a SMOKEY QUARTZ - a translucent sand-colored crystal.

LILY

A rock?

SASHA

It's a Smokey Quartz. Clears
blocked energy. It helps people...
just be.

LILY

What?

SASHA

Just try meditating with it. I
sense you could use a spiritual
bath.

LILY

And you need a real one.

Leah looks toward Lily.

LEAH

Lily... What do we say?

Lily isn't paying attention at all anymore. She's just
playing with Gucci again.

LILY

(to the cat)

I think I'll name you SKITTLES
instead. Candy names are trending
right now.

LEAH AND TOM

LILY.

LILY

(to Sasha)

Thanks for the rock.

Sasha turns to Harper.

SASHA

Sorry, Harp. The ass-hat goons at
the TSA took your big gift. But
I've got something else for you...

Sasha takes out a drawstring bag and hands it to Harper.

Harper loosens the puckered knot and takes out a beautiful
deck of TAROT CARDS. A torrent of images fall into her hand.

SASHA (CONT'D)
I got them from a very powerful SHE-man in Palo Alto.

TOM
A *what*?

SASHA
A She-man. Like a shaman. But a self-realized woman.

TOM
Of course.

SASHA
(to Harper)
I'll teach you how to use these.
But only you can touch them.
They'll only talk to you.

LILY
But they're just cards. Mom says that's what life coaches are for.

Leah looks embarrassed.

SASHA
(to Leah)
Really? A life coach for a seven year old?

TOM
Well, Sasha, thank you so much for all these *chakra*-opening gifts. But girls, I think it's getting to be bedtime.

LEAH
(to Lily)
Santa will be by soon but only if you're sleeping!

LILY
Oh joy, I hope I get more ROCKS.

Lily scoops up SKITTLES and trundles off to bed. For such a bitchy little girl, she and that cat look pretty cute.

Harper follows up the stairs, on her phone again.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tom, Leah and Sasha toast 3 glasses of EGG NOG. Extra nog.

SASHA

So after all the camels came down
with dysentery, I had to skedaddle.
You've never seen anyone more angry
than Bedouins who have lost their
camels. So I called Porter--

Tom tries to catch up.

TOM

The Rothschild?

SASHA

Rockefeller. Anyway, getting out of
Israel was a diplomatic nightmare,
but then the alimony finally
dropped, so-- that's when I founded
We-Aid.

LEAH

(under her breath)

Please. New name.

SASHA

But all I really want to do right
now is thank you guys. I mean, you
must be exhausted. This place looks
incredible.

Leah beams.

TOM

Thanks, Sash.

SASHA

Ok. So kids are tucked in. Santa's
on his way.

DING!

TOM

My cookies!

SASHA

No, you guys sit and relax. I got
it. Need a refill anyway.

She swirls a last sip of nog and heads into the kitchen where
she...

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Reaches into her pants. What?

She digs around.

What??

Finally she plucks out-- a little vial. What?!?!

Cue George Strait's CHRISTMAS COOKIES, as Sasha:

- Uncorks the vial
- Sprinkles the liquid onto the freshly baked cookies
- Plates them

...What the fuck was in that vial?

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM

On the screen plays the opening of A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Tom and Leah snuggle under a cashmere blanket. Sasha enters with a plate full of these mystery cookies.

SASHA

Alright, you guys enjoy these. I'm off to catch up with the Baumls.

LEAH

The Baumls? When's the last time you talked to Sara? Or Jacob?

SASHA

They watch my livestream.

TOM

Livestream?

SASHA

Men in China really like to watch me cook.

Tom shakes his head quickly back and forth.

TOM
Nevermind-nevermind-
nevermind.

LEAH
Ok. Give them my best, I guess.

SASHA
Will do.

TOM
(mouth full of cookie)
At least take one for the road.
(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)
If I do say so myself, they are
GOOD. Quite herbaceous.

He shrugs.

TOM (CONT'D)
Thanks, Pinterest.

Tom holds one out for Sasha to take. She just smiles slyly.

SASHA
Nah, I'm good. I'm Keto right now.
Enjoy the movie.

Sasha leaves as Tom and Leah settle in for a night of Christmas movies. Smiling, they toast eggnog, dunk a cookie, and chomp down.

LATER

Quick cuts show Tom and Leah's disproportionate reactions to the scenes from A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

- Tom laughing hysterically at Tiny Tim and mocking his limp across the room.
- Scared of Marley's ghost chains and wails.
- Weeping at Scrooge buying a Christmas goose for a poor family.

Then a hard cut to--

CREDITS ON THE SCREEN.

Reverse on Tom and Leah-- PASSED OUT.

Drool from Leah. Snores from Tom.

A long thread of Leah's drool perilously nears Tom's eyelid as--

BANG BANG BANG.

Some absurdly loud commotion from the kitchen.

The spit lands on his eye. Still not awake.

CRASH!!

That does it. Tom and Leah jolt awake. Leah grabs onto Tom's arm, frightened. They talk in hushed tones.

LEAH
Did you hear that??

TOM
Yeah, did you??

LEAH
...Yes. That's why I asked you.

TOM
So you DID hear?

LEAH
YES!

CLATTER-CRASH. More sounds of shit breaking in the kitchen.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Are you gonna go look??

TOM
Do I have to?

LEAH
Tom!

TOM
Ok, ok. Fine. But you're my backup.

Leah snags the fire poker. Tom grabs a NUTCRACKER.

Leah throws a judgmental look at Tom for his weapon of choice. Tom shrugs. Cranks the jaw a couple times.

They creep in the dark, listening intently.

CRUNCH CRUNCH. The sounds of something snacking. A raccoon? Sasha? Skittles?

Tom takes point into--

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tom's toe bumps the kitchen island, startling him. He reflexively tries to wield the nutcracker, but instead the MOUTH OPENS-- spilling nut shells loudly onto the tile floor...

Spooking...

MOTHER FUCKING SANTA CLAUS.

Tom and Santa lock eyes. Like animals in the wild, full of fear and confusion, both are frozen.

Leah, hearing the nut-spill from the next room, comes ROARING IN-- brandishing the fire poker.

She turns into the kitchen to see SANTA and unleashes a wild swing into his body. He crumples to the ground. An outsized CANDY CANE clatters from his pocket.

Beat.

Tom and Leah look to each other. To their own hands. To the fire poker. To the Santa on their floor.

Stunned, she drops the poker.

LEAH
Who the fuck is this??

TOM
Why do you think I know?

LEAH
(proud)
I really hit him hard.

TOM
Yeah I'm pretty sure he's unconscious. I almost had him.

LEAH
Not the time, Tom. You already spilled your nuts.

Tom looks down at the spilled nuts, and his own, ashamed.

TOM
Maybe it's some drunken Santa who broke into the wrong house.

LEAH
Yeah- like some sex thing?

TOM
No... like a Christmas thing. Does he have presents?

LEAH
I'm not touching him. I already did my part as "back up". Your turn.

Tom sighs and picks up the fire poker. Pokes at Santa.

A LETTER flits from within his coat, does a MAGICAL loopedy-loop and lands UP on the kitchen island.

Beat. Tom ponders for a second.

TOM
Do you feel a little off?

LEAH
Yeah... Kinda like I took an Ambien. Or kinda... you know...

TOM AND LEAH
(realizing at the same time)
Stoned??

LEAH
(mind racing)
The cookies! Sasha!

TOM
Nooooo. She wouldn't taint my cookies.

LEAH
She would.
(beat)
She did.

TOM
Wait wait, weed doesn't make you hallucinate. It's not like we dropped LSD.

LEAH
So then, this guy is really here.

Leah pokes him again.

LEAH (CONT'D)
On our kitchen floor. Dressed as Santa. But that letter... just floated up to the counter top. We both saw that, right?

TOM
Yeah. Maybe it's some weird Haitian pot that makes things float.

LEAH
That doesn't make any sense.

TOM
Does any of this??

LEAH
Ok, I'll grab the letter. You keep
an eye on that asshole.

Tom holds the poker at Santa's chin. Leah opens the letter.

LEAH (CONT'D)
(reading)
HOLY SHIT. This has LILY'S NAME ON
IT. And it has all this personal
information about our family. This
guy's a stalker!!

TOM
(disgusted, agreeing)
A kiddy diddler.

LEAH
I'm calling the cops.

TOM
No no no no-- the weed. Plus
this guy might be dead-- because of
you. No cops.

A small COUGH from the floor. A poof of GLITTER from his
mouth. Eyes still closed.

SANTA
(softly)
No cops. Please. No cops.

Leah jumps.

LEAH
HOLY SHIT!

TOM
(brave)
Explain yourself, sir! Why do you
have this letter? What are you
doing in our house?

Santa drags himself upward. Leans his back against the pantry
doorway.

Now, we finally see SANTA CLAUS (50s) full on. He's got all
the trimmings you'd expect: White beard. Red suit with
matching hat. Rosy cheeks. But one thing is definitely off--
his eyes. They are severely bloodshot with heavy lids.

SANTA

Well, my drone's cookie detector went off, but then it didn't come back, so I came down here to find out what was going on, and happened upon the cookies--

He gestures to a half-eaten plate of leftover Sasha cookies.

SANTA (CONT'D)

And then I just really wanted something sour, you know? Like...

He makes little sounds- smacking his tongue against the roof of his mouth.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Tart? And then I saw you had these salt and vin--

The pantry door behind him gives way. He tumbles backwards.

Seconds later, a shower of snacks avalanche. He's buried.

Beat.

CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH.

Tom and Leah have a quick aside--

TOM

Oh my god.

LEAH

I know, I'm calling the cops now.

TOM

No! I think that's really Santa!

LEAH

Tom, you know we're HIGH right? And that Santa isn't real. Right??

She forces Tom to look at her.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Please, for the love of god, tell me you know these things.

Tom and Leah turn back around to see Santa, now dug out of the pile. He is holding a Cookie Monster-shaped COOKIE JAR.

SANTA
I'm right here, guys. Don't be
rude.

He casually opens the jar and begins to lick the interior.
He's really going at it. Leah makes an "eww" face.

Tom's in awe. Leah holds up a finger: give us a moment. Drags
Tom into the corner.

LEAH
Tom, I need you to get on my level.
That degenerate licking the cookie
jar is not Santa.

TOM
But---
(holds up finger unsteady)
What if he is? He coughed up
glitter.

LEAH
So did I at that Bowie concert --
and I'm not Santa.

TOM
But the letter. We saw--

LEAH
A gust of fucking wind, Tom.
Seriously--

LILY (O.C.)
Santa!??

Tom and Leah whirl to find their youngest in footie pajamas,
jaw dropped and eyes a'twinkle. Even little Miss Mean Girl
melts at the sight of Mr. Christmas himself.

Santa, meantime...

SANTA
Goddamit.

He pats his suit like a drunk trying to find his wallet at
last call.

SANTA (CONT'D)
(mumbling)
Where's that damn--

He notices Lily.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Darn candy cane.

Lily makes her way toward Santa who shuffles back, trying to stay out of her reach.

Leah brandishes the poker once more - a Mama Bear protecting her cub -- but Tom wants to believe.

In SLO MO, he tosses the oversized candy cane toward Santa. After it hits his face, Santa fumbles it a couple more times and then --

TWISTS the hook... a hiss of condensed energy and then--

RED AND WHITE LIGHTS ERUPT LIKE THE SECOND COMING FROM WITHIN
THE CANDY CANE

SANTA (CONT'D)
Frost-a-la-vista, baby!

He slams down the HOOK. Wait for it...

Nothing.

SANTA (CONT'D)
(grumbles)
What a waste of a line.

He rapidly rejiggers the HOOK. RED WHITE LIGHT AGAIN. CLICK.

This time it worked. A Bay-level lens flare of GREEN LIGHT pulses, blinding Lily -- who immediately wipes her eyes, turns around, ENTRANCED, and heads back to bed.

Tom does a very shitty impression of the Snoopy Dance.

Tom stops dancing.

TOM (CONT'D)
Huh? Yeah-- What did you just do to
Lily?

SANTA
Nothing I haven't done to thousands
of children before.

This fact doesn't comfort either of them.

SANTA (CONT'D)

It's a harmless beam of light that
erases her memory of me. Keeps her
out of therapy. Saves you
thousands. Now, Tom and Leah, I
need to be on my way.

He stands and begins collecting odds and ends from the kitchen as if they were his own belongings: a blender, a spatula, an onion.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Now for my gloves.

Over his own gloves, he slides on oven mitts.

SANTA (CONT'D)

And my magic sack.

He slings a stinky Hefty bag of trash over his shoulder.

Beat.

The bottom of the bag gives out: it's a putrescent waterfall.

SANTA (CONT'D)

(to self, sad)

These are horrible presents.

TOM

(realizing)

Oooohhhhhh...

Leah's not following yet.

Tom runs over and holds up the giant empty plate. Only crumbs.

LEAH

Ooooohhhhhh....

Santa is climbing onto the counter trying to whisk his way up the ventilation hood above the stove. Not going well.

SANTA

(still to self)

What a weird chimney...

TOM

(to Leah)

Santa's high. I'm pretty high. I
know you are. We need some help.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BUN & THE FOX - NIGHT

In a run-down New England pub, Christmas lights somehow make everything even sadder. A tiny tree in the corner. An 80s power ballad on the jukebox. Exact opposite of the Mercer's.

Sasha, though, is belly to the bar slamming shots of Fireball with the bartender, JACOB BAUML (30), and others avoiding Christmas relatives.

She's playing some weird game. Dice, a bingo mat and an advent calendar. She rolls the dice, takes a chocolate from the calendar and finishes it off with a shot --

SASHA
(slurring)
Seven swans a swimming!

JACOB BAUML
You missed eight maids a milking!

SASHA
What makes you think this game has
rules--

Their drunken exchange is interrupted by - BLOOP BLOOP.

Sasha's phone lights up with a text from LEAH.

ANGLE ON:

A string of EMOJIS: SANTA/COOKIE/LEAF/CIGARETTE/FREAK OUT CAT
Sasha looks at it and laughs to herself.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN

Leah and Tom are huddled around her phone.

TOM
I'm telling you, this will make
more sense than if we tried to
explain it with words. Words are
not our friends.

Beat.

TOM (CONT'D)
Oh! We should totally get back into
Words With Friends!

BA-BEEP. ANGLE ON:

Sasha's reply: COOKIE/THUMBS UP

LEAH
(ignoring Tom)
Ok. She's acknowledging that we're
high from the cookies.

Beat.

Another reply comes in: COMEDY&DRAMA MASKS/ SHRIMP/ MERMAN/
PANDA

TOM
WHAT!?

LEAH
Is it code?

TOM
What does this mask know? I don't
like the way it's looking at me.

LEAH
Shrimp Merman Panda. Shrimp Merman
Panda. Shranda. Shermanda. AMANDA?
Amanda!

TOM
Who's Amanda?

LEAH
I don't know. Wait, maybe it's
Sherman.

TOM
Well then, who's Sherman?

LEAH
I don't know. I have all the same
information you do.

TOM
I still don't like the way the mask
is looking at me.

Behind them, Santa is wedged into the vent. Legs splayed.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BUN & THE FOX - NIGHT

Sasha's back playing the game. She's in it to win it -
everyone in the bar cheers. The competition's heating up.

Her dice hand keeps accidentally hitting a series of emojis that continue to...

CUT TO:

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN

Perplex the hell out of Tom and Leah.

The next string: FLOATING MAN/DINOSAUR/ZOMBIE

TOM

You know, I thought we had it with Sherman. But--

His pontification is once again interrupted by a VERY LOUD SCREAMING ANIMOJI FOX. You know animojis: that creepy feature that records your voice and facial movements and turns you into a digital animal.

It's something that Sasha clearly accidentally recorded at the bar but is now freaking the shit out of Tom and Leah.

The fox with Sasha's voice plays on a loop: "I'LL SHOVE YOU BACK UP YOUR MOMMA'S BABY MAKER!"

Tom and Leah are horrified.

LEAH

But we have the same mom.

TOM

Listen. I feel like things are getting lost in translation. I'm not saying emojis weren't a good idea but maybe they weren't a good idea.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BUN & THE FOX - NIGHT

Sasha answers her phone.

SASHA

Hey party animals! How's Santa doing?

INTERCUT BETWEEN SASHA & TOM/LEAH

TOM

Not so --

He spies Santa with two wooden spoons pretending to be in Rush, drumming away, on two CB2 sugar jars, eyes closed.

SANTA
(in BG)
Guys, guys-- I'm Keith Moon.

TOM
Good. Can you come home? Need help with Santa.

Leah leans into the phone.

LEAH
(older sister voice)
Sasha - get your ass home right now.

SASHA
Let me just finish. I'm on a roll.
One away from the Triple Elf Challenge. Then I'll be home to help "with Santa."

LEAH
(rising voice)
Sasha. I know what you did to the cookies. Home. Now.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN

Tom is focused on figuring out Santa's magic letter. He keeps FLICKING it in the air. Then he and Leah watch it fall.

Sasha bursts in, clearly quite inebriated. She wears a Toilet Paper sash declaring her "Elf Queen."

Sasha clocks Santa.

SASHA
Whoa whoa whoa, who's the strange dude? I thought we said "no men", Leah?

TOM
I'm ALMOST positive we told you it was Santa.

SASHA
Yeah, but I just thought you were stoned.

LEAH

Oh we are.

(realizing)

Actually, I don't feel so good.

Sasha sobers up immediately at the sight of this stranger in the house. She marches right up to Santa and grabs him by his nuts.

SASHA

Listen. I don't know who you are, but these are nice people. And you are clearly in the wrong house. So why don't you pack up your merry band of shit and get the fuck out of here.

Santa looks deep into Sasha's eyes. She is momentarily hypnotized by his gaze. A TWINKLE.

SANTA

Sasha Mandelbaum.

Beat. He strains for more TWINKLE. Wheels turning...

SANTA (CONT'D)

Yeah, I don't get a lot of Mandelbaums on my list. So, I'm out.

SASHA

(to Leah)

How the fuck does this guy know my name??

Sasha spies a RED VELVET SACK slumped in the corner of the kitchen. It's next to the ripped trash bag Santa mistook for it.

SASHA (CONT'D)

He's stealing!

She's stomps over to the sack, still ranting.

SASHA (CONT'D)

What kind of asshole dresses up like Santa on Christmas to ste--

She yanks open the sack and is cut off by--

A RED AND GREEN DRONE

It shoots out of the bag, zipping around the kitchen.

The drone locks onto the CHRISTMAS TREE in the next room.

Within seconds it drops off a series of PRESENTS and returns to Santa's magical bag.

Beat.

Sasha races to the living room and examines the IMMACULATELY WRAPPED presents, each with a cursive "to" label for each Mercer child.

She picks one up. Shakes it.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Alright, what's your game? You get off on stalking families? Is this anthrax? Nanny cams, you sicko? What's with the drone? Did Amazon send you?

Santa looks sad and confused.

Then a-la Jurassic Park, the EGG NOG on the table starts to VIBRATE as a THUD THUD THUD emanates from above.

SANTA

Ah, Rudy is getting antsy.

SASHA

That your code name for your buddy up there? What's the plan? A 'lil chloroform, a 'lil...

(thinking, definitely still drunk)

"deck the halls with bloody bodies?"

LEAH

What does that even mean?

TOM
(so fucked up)
Fa-la-la-la-la...

Leah shoots Tom a glare.

Sasha pops open a living room window. Sticks her head out and looks up. Who is up there?

SASHA

Rudy? We got your friend down here.

Then her eyes adjust. And focus on--

RUDY. Not Santa's "buddy." A real live fucking REINDEER aka RUDOLPH. His nose GLOWS a magical red.

Sasha double-takes. Still there. She slams the window shut.

Sasha re-examines everything in rapid succession in a new light: Santa, drone, trash, empty plate of cookies, stoned sister.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Ok. We need a plan.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

A remodeled basement complete with movie couch, projector and a pinball machine. Even a mini kitchen.

Sasha, Leah and Tom sit across from Santa, who mans a single chair.

He's mid-story.

SANTA
...So I'd just finished China, and the opium had really kicked in. I thought it would be hilarious for Giuseppe over in Pisa to get a dead rat that year instead of a stick and a hoop.

Tom has a stoner pensive look.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Anyway, needless to say, that didn't end so well. Bunch of people wound up sick.

TOM
Do you mean the Plague???

SANTA
Plague Shmague. It wasn't a good year. The missus left me for a few decades. Had to get my act together. So yeah. Sober for 680 years. Except now, I guess I'm back at square one.

He pulls out a SOLID GOLD "SIX HUNDRED YEAR SOBER CHIP." It clatters to the floor.

SANTA (CONT'D)
My sponsor's not gonna be happy about this.

LEAH

Sponsor?

SANTA

Ozzie.

LEAH

Who?

SANTA

Uh, oh yeah. You probably know him as Osterhase.

SASHA, TOM, LEAH

Who?

SANTA

You know, big ears, fluffy tail, tells the best dirty jokes you've ever heard...

Puzzlement across their faces.

SANTA (CONT'D)

...Uh.... Carries a basket... lays eggs... I think you guys paint them for some reason.

LEAH

The Easter Bunny?!? None of this is happening right now.

SANTA

Holy Shit, he hatesssss that name.

Santa starts cracking up. Pulls a cookie he secreted away under his beard. Snacks on it.

TOM

SANTA (CONT'D)

(to self) Jesus.
In for a penny, in for a pound...

SANTA

(still laughing)

Really NAILED that one!

Beat.

Santa taps at his wrists.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Get it?!?! NAILED.

Wiping a tear from a hard laugh, Santa sighs deeply.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Alright. Enough fun. Time to get
going.

Santa pushes himself to his feet. Stands. Slowly wobbles from side to side, then TOPPLES.

Face first. Into the pinball machine.

DING DA-DING DING.

TOM
Well. Looks like Christmas is
cancelled this year.

EXT. THE NORTH POLE - NIGHT

Unholy gusts of wind buffet the landscape. It's blinding white. Except for--

A SIMPLE POLE

It's not jolly and bright like you may have thought. It's actually kind of rusted and austere.

The only thing that sets it apart is a barely visible red emergency light that BLINKS a staccato rhythm.

We PAN below, watching the layers of the earth unfold--

A FORMER RESEARCH FACILITY

A UFO

SKELETONS OF EARLY MAN

And then...

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - WAR ROOM - NIGHT

A group of ELVES sit around a Strangelove-style table facing a GIANT ELECTRONIC MAP OF THE WORLD.

On the map, a white light blinks over America's Northeast.

The lead elf-- ESTELLE-- is not happy.

ESTELLE
He should be tracking over Denver
by now. Anyone have eyes on Big
Red?

We see the other elves. Equally nervous. One punches up a
sleigh-cam.

The live feed materializes where the map was.

In GREEN NIGHT VISION, we see two squirrels humping in the
snow.

The elf frantically jams buttons to switch the feed. Instead,
CHESTNUTS ROASTING ON AN OPEN FIRE by Nat King Cole blares.

ESTELLE (CONT'D)
Dammit, George.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Sasha drags a blanket over a knocked-out Santa, curled up on
the couch.

Leah and Tom have a serious sidebar by the mini-kitchen. They
chug bottled water from the fridge.

LEAH
We need a fact check. Fact: we've
seen some crazy shit tonight. But,
also fact: we've eaten some Haitian
hash. I don't know what that does
to you. But this could all be some
big collective hallucination. If we
just go to bed, we'll wake up with
a hangover, but no Santa.

TOM
Or we'll wake up and every kid in
the world will be present-less.

LEAH
Tom. What are you saying?

TOM
I'm just saying. Santa's not going
anywhere--

ANGLE ON: Santa. His FAT GUT spills out of his suit. Yeah.
He's not going anywhere.

TOM (CONT'D)
--And he's got a lot of gifts, or
drones with gifts, that need to be
delivered. Why don't we just try
this block?

LEAH
You wanna play Santa Claus?

SASHA
(overhearing)
I'm sure you guys need to spice
things up, but now's not the time.

LEAH
(ignoring Sasha)
Pro/con?

Tom nods and they scrounge up a piece of paper and pen.

Tom writes PRO and CON at the top. They fill in the columns
as they go.

TOM
Pro: It's a good story.

LEAH
Con: It's a story that will make us
lose our friends. Maybe our
children.

TOM
Pro: Save Christmas.

LEAH
Con: Get arrested.

TOM
Pro: Have an adventure.

SASHA
I second Tom.

Leah points again at "get arrested."

TOM
Pro: We help Santa.

LEAH
Con: Or, that's NOT Santa and it's
some drunk dude that we've left at
home with our children.

SASHA

I can stay and watch him. And the kids. Leah, if there's anyone who needs this, it's you.

Tom is writing: "Pro: Free babysitter."

LEAH

You mean the one who brought the drugs into the house?

SANTA

(from the couch)

I'm COMING WITH YOU!! You neeeeeed me. The reindeer don't like strangers. STRANGER DANGER!!

TOM

(pleading)

Come on... Please. Not even the neighborhood, just one house. Look, you know that on the commune we didn't have Christmas. But what I never told you is what we *did* do. We stood outside the Macy's and handed out pamphlets about how Christmas was "the Red Scare." "Santa the Capitalist." All about materialism and morality based on some mystical "nice and naughty list." IT SUCKED. So, I deserve this. And so do you. Neither of us got to have real Christmases. Come on-- stinky whitefish and bratty New York girls comparing presents. Not festive. So, here it is. Right in front of us. Real magic.

She looks at Tom, thinking.

Then Santa VOMITS milk and cookies all over the basement carpet.

LEAH

Real magic there, Tom.

Leah thinks. Holds up a finger.

LEAH (CONT'D)

One.

CUT TO:

STAIRWELL

Leah, Tom and Sasha lead Santa up the stairs via a trail of Salt and Vinegar chips.

Every few steps is punctuated with a "CRUNCH CRUNCH."

Santa's licking them straight off the steps.

After a few pratfalls and broken lamps, they finally make it to the top.

EXT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Sasha, Leah and Tom continue to lead Santa.

Leah looks up at the roof-- sees the sleigh.

LEAH

Alright, how are we doing this?

TOM

The gutters!

LEAH

(excited)

You finished them?

TOM

No... but I left the ladder out.

Tom races around the side of the house, returning seconds later with a BIG LADDER.

Sasha crouches down to get on Santa's level-- he's currently sitting in the snow, going to town on the chips.

SASHA

Okay Santa, we're gonna play a game. It's called 'climb the ladder and don't fall off.' Your prize--

Sasha snatches the chips. Santa frowns.

SASHA (CONT'D)

These.

Santa smiles.

MOMENTS LATER

Tom yells from atop the roof.

TOM
Okay! Send him up!

Sasha and Leah cajole Santa up the ladder. It's wobbly, but he's making progress. About halfway up, a CAR approaches.

Leah and Sasha exchange a panicked glance.

LEAH
Oh shit. What are we gonna do?

The car passes, and a ROWDY TEENAGER leans out the window.

ROWDY TEEN
Fuck yeah Santa!!! Merry Fucking Christmas!!!

Santa turns, excited. Throws up a ROCKER HORN, releasing one hand from the ladder.

The car peels off.

SASHA
Nothing. Santas doing dumb shit
aren't exactly a rarity this time
of year.

Uh oh, Santa has lost his balance. At the top, Tom tries to grab back the teetering ladder, which has now gone VERTICAL. No longer leaning on the roof.

TOM
LEAN. FORWARD.

Not wanting to chance it, Leah pushes the ladder back against the roof. Problem solved.

EXT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - ROOF

Right next to their top-of-the-line satellite dish that picks up game shows all the way in Japan--

A LINE OF BE-BELLED REINDEER. Harnessed and ready to fly.

Antsy, they pull against reins leading to the...

Ultra-modern and sleek LAPLANDER 3000.

Mag-lev sleigh rails hover inches above the roof.

The sleigh's engineering, body and aerodynamics are of a technology not even dreamt of by Tesla.

If we weren't inches away, we might not even see it. The paint coat is GHETTO-CHROME. Which yeah, is tacky, but also is the magic cloaking mechanism that keeps Santa incognito. The reflection is so crisp, it camouflages all.

Tom GASPS with joy.

TOM
They're so cute!!!

LEAH
(whisper-yell)
Shh!!! The kids!

TOM
(whisper-yell)
Look at its FACE!!!

Tom nuzzles into VIXEN and strokes her mane.

He points to his own VIXEN sweater, then at the actual reindeer. Back and forth- in awe.

TOM (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Take a photo!!

He smiles for too long.

Sasha is trying to keep Santa on his feet-- he's exhausted from the climb and the cookies have REALLY kicked in now. Leah pushes a button near what appears to be a door hatch. It slides up like a wing on a brand-new Lambo. Looks like Santa went through a middle-aged crisis.

In the COCKPIT, Leah fiddles with the sleigh's controls.

It's actually just a giant iPad like in a Tesla. She tries to swipe but it is LOCKED. Requires FACIAL RECOGNITION.

Ah, shit.

LEAH
Sasha, we need him over here.

Leah turns. Tom and Sasha have apparently given up on the plan and are now just snapping selfies with Vixen.

Vixen in a kiss sandwich. Peace Sign. You know, adults pretending to be young again.

But in his stupor, Tom has neglected to flip it into selfie mode and is just taking pictures of the night sky.

LEAH (CONT'D)
You two, quit fucking around! I
need help.

She is trying to deadlift Santa by herself toward the facial recognition. Puke on her sweater.

Sasha whips around.

SASHA
Oh -- and who do we have here? Ah
yes, it's... Lumpy Leah...

Leah is immediately angered at the mention of this nickname.

LEAH
That name never made sense.

SASHA
Yeah, it does. You're just a lump.
A lump of no fun.

Tom sniggers, his hand immediately covering his mouth.

LEAH
Seriously, Tom? You're gonna stick
with Requiem for a Dream over
there?

TOM
Sorry. But right now, it's kind of
true.

He and Sasha high-five.

LEAH
I could be listening to a sleepcast
right now with a moisturizing mask,
but instead, because you wanted to,
we're up here. So if you want to do
this, then let's do it.

SASHA
Chill, Lumpy.

Tom playfully swats at Sasha.

TOM
C'mon, knock it off. She's right.
(sotto, stoned laugh)
And lumpy.

Finally as one, Sasha and Leah have managed to get Santa's torso in the sleigh. His face is inches away from a RECOG cam.

With a massive UMPH, Tom linebacker pushes Santa into the sleigh. But a little too much UMPH. They both tumble in.

Santa somersaults, now in an awkward handstand. But...

The iPad reads his upside-down face. BEEP. Claus Confirmed.

Simultaneously, the sleigh's mag-lev deactivates. A THUD and a burst of snow as it lands square on the roof.

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - WAR ROOM

On screen, a photo of LEAH slides into place. A corporate headshot.

Another elf, BUCK-- buck teeth and glasses-- paces in front of the screen.

BUCK

This is Leah Mandelbaum. Raised in Manhattan. Jewish. Upper West Side.

The elves shrug as to say "sounds about right."

BUCK (CONT'D)

Currently working as a high powered ad exec for Dayton Smith Perlin Hansen Carrico Hoppey Smith...

His eyes continue to trail down the list--

BUCK (CONT'D)

--etc. Her last campaign was for Little Birdie's Baby Boots-- "Don't leave the nest without them" was a massive success.

Buck KICKS UP his feet. He's wearing them. Little knit baby socks.

BUCK (CONT'D)

Like walking on air. Wait - that should have been the slogan.

Estelle clears her throat-- get on with it.

BUCK (CONT'D)

She only became 'Yule' when in 1994 she met--

Another photo joins Leah on the screen. It's TOM. But he doesn't have a corporate headshot. So it's his FACEBOOK profile picture. He's laying down in front of the Washington Monument. From this angle, it looks like his dong.

A sigh at his immaturity from Estelle.

BUCK (CONT'D)

Tom Mercer. Raised on a socialist commune outside Brattleboro, Vermont. Had a-- weird relationship with Christmas most of his life.

On the screen, a surveillance photo of Tom and other KIDS FROM THE COMMUNE handing out tracts with slogans like "The real man in red: Why you should love Marx."

BUCK (CONT'D)

He and Leah met at NYU. A Kurt Cobain memorial.

ESTELLE

How do you have all this information?

BUCK

Facebook, ma'am. It knows all. Plus, Zuckerberg is half elf.

They all nod knowingly.

BUCK (CONT'D)

So, what you're looking at here, are the potential captors of Big Red.

Off Estelle, thinking....

EXT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - ROOF - NIGHT

On the sleigh's iPad, there is a shockingly pedestrian array of APPS: MAPS, FACEBOOK, AMAZON PRIME, INSTAGRAM, NETFLIX, YOUTUBE, MY FITNESS PAL and MISTLETOE.

Leah shrugs and clicks MISTLETOE, the most X-mas of all the apps.

Immediately, she regrets it. A selection of live-stream Christmas-themed PORN appears. Then a PRIVATE MESSAGE: "Can't wait to see you and the Mrs. again. I miss your North Pole..."

She frantically clicks it off, but Tom has seen it all and it's like a child walking in on their parents.

Innocence tarnished.

SANTA
(grumbling)
Stuffed her stocking good.

Tom looks broken. Innocence destroyed.

LEAH
I don't even want to touch this now.

She pulls up her sweater sleeve so it covers her hand.

TOM
(a new wave of stoned)
Leah, look at Dancer. Look at Prancer. Look at Donner.

As their names are called, the reindeer stand at attention, starting to paw at the roof below.

Leah kisses Tom's cheek.

LEAH
Keep going, you stoned genius.

TOM
Look at Sleepy and Grumpy and Doc.

LEAH
No, no, no.

Sasha is now outside the sleigh. Reading the reindeer names from their tags.

SASHA
(coaching Tom from afar)
Dasher. Comet. Cupid. Rudolph.

Tom repeats each one. Ending with.... VIXEN.

Nothing happens.

Leah looks down at her own sweater and...

LEAH
(yelling)
BLITZEN!

In a great explosion of hooves and a burst of snow, the door wings seal shut and they finally take off ---

LEAH & TOM
(like kids)
WWWHHEEEEEE!!!

INT. SANTA'S SLEIGH

Tom, Leah and a still-upside-down Santa all brace for...

THUD. They look outside.

It's the neighbor's roof. They can still see Sasha just across.

Everyone looks, frankly, disappointed.

TOM
How do you do this in one night?
This goes against physics.

LEAH
Yeah, you've been doing this 1,000
years and...

SANTA
(still fucked)
There's the thing with the button --
click-- and it makes the things go--
buzzzzzzzzzz--

Santa, follows the trails of his hands, mesmerized.

TOM
I think we're on our own here.

From the sleigh's "rear view mirror" dangles a GOLDEN GLOBE ORNAMENT. Santa- again, still upside down, stares into his reflection.

SANTA
To be nice, Or not to be nice. That
is to be...
(thinking)
Naughty? Is there any such thing as
a truly good deed? Or is everyone
good for the presents?

TOM
Yeah. He's gone Freshman philosophy
on us.

LEAH
Chimney?

POV: Red brick encircles a bottomless black pit.

The passage is narrow. A basketball would wedge here. Certainly not big enough for an adult.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S ROOF - NIGHT

But that's not stopping Tom. He's got one leg jammed into the crevice.

LEAH
You really think that's gonna end well?

TOM
I'm not an IDIOT. I'm testing for the magic.

LEAH
The magic?

TOM
(gesturing to the sleigh)
Santa-- flying reindeer-- hello!

LEAH
Ok. Even using that logic, what magic do you bring to that chimney?

Tom swirls his hands like an old mystic and makes an "oooooo" sound, like he's making something magical happen.

Beat. Leah stands back, arms crossed, waiting.

TOM
(stuck in the chimney)
Ok yeah, this isn't gonna work.

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - WAR ROOM

It's like a NASA launch, as the elves all stare breathlessly at the world monitor. The map shows Santa is now on the move!

The elves shout and pat each other on the back in celebration.

ESTELLE

We're a go, people. Christmas is
back on track.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Tom and Leah are now outside the front door, presents in hand. All lights are off, save for a glittering Christmas tree inside.

They tip-toe around like cartoon burglars, casing the joint. Without consulting his wife, Tom reaches for a large ROCK and approaches a ground floor window. He rears back--

SLAP. His arm is stopped mid-throw by Leah. She gives a sharp head nod.

LEAH

(mouthing)

No.

He gently puts down the rock. Leah opens her own hand: it's obviously one of those faux-rocks that hides keys.

Tom nods in understanding. Grabs the faux rock from her and rears back--

Leah grabs his arm again.

LEAH (CONT'D)

No!

She pries the bottom off, revealing some keys.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Remember when I had to watch Daniel
for a week while they were in Bali?

He nods, pretending he remembers. He doesn't.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

ANGLE ON A GOLD NAME PLATE READING "DANIEL."

RACK TO:

A PARROT

A touch of the Amazon in the suburbs. Painted like a sunset. Black beak and sharp tongue.

Daniel squawks gently. Asleep.

The bird cage sits in the LIVING ROOM. The darkness is now pierced by TWO IPHONE FLASHLIGHTS SCANNING THE ROOM.

Leah and Tom pad their way in. They lock eyes with a now-awake Daniel.

Beat.

They keep moving- headed toward the Christmas tree in the next room.

DANIEL

Stop it.

Leah and Tom whip their heads back.

TOM

(whispering)

It talks??

LEAH

Yeah, repeats whatever it hears the most.

Beat.

TOM

That's not good then...

DANIEL

Stop it! Stop it!

TOM

I'm just saying, "stop it" isn't something one hears in a loving househo-

LEAH

Stop it!

DANIEL

Stop it!

She realizes she sounds just like the bird. Rolls her eyes.

LEAH

(whispering)

Shut up. You know what I mean. We have to drop these and get out of here.

They finally make it to the tree and drop the presents.

Leah steps back, contemplating their placement. Remember, she's an ad exec-- all about optics.

She rearranges the gifts. Steps back again.

TOM
Seriously?

DANIEL
Little bitch! Little bitch!

Tom whips around- shocked at Daniel's potty beak.

Leah steps back and looks at the presents again. Still not right!

Eyes glued to the tree, she steps around, not looking where she is going and--

Her foot snags on the Christmas Tree light cord. It all seems okay until--

ANGLE ON THE CROWN MOLDING

The LIGHTS strung around the house start to SNAP OFF. One by one. Beat by beat.

Tom and Leah watch helplessly as the lights continue to dismantle, all the way into Daniel's room.

DANIEL
(louder)
Little bitch! Stop it! Little
bitch! Stop it!

The cord WHIPS off and CLOTHESLINES the base of Daniel's cage-stand. Fuck.

The cage crashes to the floor. His little door opens. And Daniel is free.

You can hear the bird's echoes through the house as he flutters around frantically.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Leah's-a-bitch! Leah's-a-bitch!

Leah's jaw drops to the floor.

TOM
I thought it was saying LITTLE
BITCH.

DANIEL
Leah's-a-bitch!

TOM
Nope, it's definitely --

TOM (CONT'D) DANIEL
Leah's a bitch! Leah's a bitch!

LEAH
I watched that bird for Becky for a
week!

He's on his tiptoes, struggling to catch it.

LEAH (CONT'D)
But no, no. I get "Leah's a bitch!"

She swats at it angrily - spooking it more.

But Tom's got a solution: he snatches a large WOODEN FRUIT BOWL from the table.

Daniel's backed into a corner. Terrified.

Tom raises the bowl. He lowers it--

TOM
GOTCHA!

Daniel jukes to the left, past an arched window. But Tom's reflexes are all stoned dad --

And the bowl SAILS through the window. A blissful moment of silence as Daniel flaps into the night.

DANIEL
(echoing)
Leah's a bitch!

Then -- the ADT ALARM goes like hell venting steam.

TOM LEAH
Shit. Shit.

TOM
Let's go.

LEAH
Hold on.

Tom dumbfounded.

Leah makes a run for the presents she so carefully placed. Takes them back.

LEAH (CONT'D)
No presents.

TOM
What?

LEAH
No presents for the Cooper's.
Santa's revenge.

INT. SANTA'S SLEIGH - ROOF - NIGHT

Tom and Leah, out of breath, slide back into the sleigh.

SANTA
Ergo, naughtiness is niceness --
and the world has no meaning.

Tom's hunting the dash.

TOM
Does it have a reverse?

SANTA
Does time?

LEAH
Not TIME, Santa. The sleigh.

Tom and Leah share a simultaneous in-over-our-heads knowing glance.

LEAH (CONT'D)
We're going to have to sober him up.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - BASEMENT - BATHROOM

Sasha, Tom and Leah all stare down at a passed out Santa in a clawfoot tub.

Leah tries to nudge a COCONUT WATER into his mouth. No response.

Leah steps back. CRACKS her knuckles. Alright-- let's do this.

- A HALF-NAKED SANTA IS BLASTED FULL FORCE BY A SPRAY OF WATER.

- NOW AWAKE, SANTA SWATS A CUP OF COFFEE BACK AT TOM.

- A COFFEE-SOAKED TOM DUMPS MORE SUGAR INTO THE NEXT CUP. OUT THE WINDOW, WE SEE AN ADT VAN SCREECH. FAT SECURITY PILES OUT. AN OBLIVIOUS TOM SNEAKS ANOTHER BITE OF **POT COOKIE**.

- SASHA FORCE-FEEDS BREAD DOWN SANTA'S THROAT.
- LEAH ANSWERS THE DOOR- IT'S MRS. COOPER IN PJS.

LEAH
(feigning concern)
No, I'm so sorry Becky, I haven't
seen Daniel.

- SANTA ATTEMPTING FIELD SOBRIETY TESTS: KIND OF PASSING.

EXT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - ROOF

Tom, Leah and Sasha all wave a fair-well to Santa as he rides off into the night.

...

And straight into a telephone pole. The reindeer are snagged on wires. Prancer whimpers. Beat.

The wing slides up. Santa tumbles out into the snow. SPLAT.

Not good. At. All.

Tom looks at Leah.

TOM
Please please please please
please please--

Ignoring her adolescent husband, Leah is doing a damage assessment. Ever the adult in charge.

Then the LIGHT from a BEDROOM BELOW flips on. Reflecting on the snow in the backyard. Luckily none of the kids' rooms face the street and the mayhem occurring on it. Lily's up.

SASHA
I got it. You guys deal with Willie Nelson over there.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - LILY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Not a typical little girl's bedroom. A vanity - no toys.

Sasha sits on Lily's bed nursing a bottle of Christmas merlot. Lily holds Skittles.

SASHA

...And that's why peppermint Schnapps and driving don't mix on Christmas. Or ever.

LILY

Does peppermint Schnapps just taste like peppermint?

SASHA

Yes. And if you mix it with chocol-- I mean. It tastes like poop. Never drink it. K?

Lily side-eyes Sasha, not buying any of it.

LILY

I'm having my first drink at age 10 anyway, so I'll find out then. I'm thinking gin.

Off of Sasha's concerned expression...

EXT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - ROOF

Leah and Tom continue a debate.

TOM

Just go with me on this...

He takes half a Haitian cookie out of his pocket.

LEAH

Tom!

TOM

What?

LEAH

What are you doing?

TOM

Ok, remember that time we drank all that vodka and broke into the NYU aquatic center?

A small smile from Leah- she remembers.

TOM (CONT'D)

And it was when I first said I love you. In hindsight, the drinking and swimming together was probably not the brightest idea.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)
But what was great was you and me.
On an adventure. A little fucked
up. Ok, A LOT fucked up. And this
just fell into our lap.

RACK to the street where Santa's taking a piss in the snow.

TOM (CONT'D)
Come on... Taste the magic!

Leah finally relents. Shrugs and takes the cookie. A small
bite

LEAH
(chewing)
Pretty sure none of this is real
anyway.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - LILY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sasha digs the hole a little deeper.

SASHA
Statistically, between Thanksgiving
and New Years there are the most
drunk driving accidents. And that's
not even counting suicides. Do you
know most suicide victims have
alcohol in their systems?

Thankfully she's interrupted by--

HARPER

She stomps into Lily's room, holding her zen garden. A fresh
CAT TURD laid out.

HARPER
We need to have a talk, Lily--

Harper sees Sasha.

HARPER (CONT'D)
What are you guys doing?

SASHA
Bedtime stories. Need to work on
mine. Speaking of, let's all go
back there.

LILY

I can't. I'm not tired anymore. All I'm thinking about is schnapps and suicide.

Harper looks at Sasha-- an eyebrow raised.

Sasha thinks for a moment.

SASHA

Alright, I'm calling an audible. Sleepover. We can go to my room downstairs. S'mores. Movies. Sound good? Great.

Skittles, meantime, is still learning what a litter box is. She PISSES all over Lily's floor.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Skittles better keep it in her pants.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sasha leads the girls through the hall and down the stairs. The girls carry pillows, blankets, etc. Sasha speaks loudly as to warn Leah or Tom that they are on their way.

SASHA

(loud)

Okay! Here we go! Down the stairs!

LILY

We don't need a narrator, aunt Sasha.

SASHA

(ignoring, louder)

So much fun going to the BASEMENT! Now just ignore the mess in the kitchen there, just down these stairs. Gooooood. Be there in a minute! Just making sure the door is locked! And Saint... Nick.. Has... Cookies.

From the basement stairs, Harper flashes back a "what's the deal" look at Sasha.

Sasha points to the wine in her hand.

SASHA (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I'm a little drunk.

Harper nods. Makes sense.

Sasha closes the basement door behind her, and races to the front door.

EXT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - FRONT DOOR

In the BG, Santa and the now untangled reindeer await Tom and Leah, who are saying farewell to Sasha.

LEAH
If they ask, just say we're helping
Becky look for Daniel. No mentions
of Anta-Say Aus-Clay.

SASHA
What?

LEAH
Santa Claus. Just-- Remember the
rules.

TOM
(dragging Leah away)
She's got it under control.

Tom and Leah start toward the sleigh--

TOM (CONT'D)
Hang on.

He darts quickly back into the house-- returning with a ZIPLOCK BAG of broken pot cookies.

TOM (CONT'D)
For the road.

Sasha smiles. Leah doesn't.

INT. SANTA'S SLEIGH - SCARSDALE STREET

LEAH
Ok, Santa. Let's get to sleighing.

Santa is now truly Willie Nelson high.

SANTA
Just chillllll, guys. Hey Tom, toss
me one of those.

Tom reaches for a cookie. Leah lowers his hand. Scolds him with her eyes: "You should know better."

SANTA (CONT'D)
Don't be a buzz kill, Leah. I'm
soooo hungry.

Leah deploys years of parenting experience.

LEAH
Ok, Santa. I'll tell you what. You
finish allllll of Scarsdale, and
you can have a cookie. Deal?

SANTA
Deal!

Santa rapid-slurs:

SANTA (CONT'D)
Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen,
Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen,
Rudolph!!!!

And they are off.

Christmas in 2019 works a little differently than you may have previously imagined. Remember that drone from the Mercer's kitchen? Well that's the magical system which delivers presents in our day and age.

So, Santa's sleigh hovers high above the Scarsdale suburbs.

In the sleigh, Santa removes a glove. He presses his index finger onto the iPad. SCANNED.

The app display is replaced by a SPEEDOMETER, ALTIMETER, ETC.

Tom and Leah share a look. Then the sleigh RATTLES.

A hatch in the front glides open. SANTA'S SACK O' PRESENTS is inside. Beat.

From within it, HUNDREDS of those red and green DRONES scatter into the night. Each hauling various wrapped gifts.

TOM
I was wondering...

Santa turns to Leah.

SANTA
Alrighty. Now about that cookie.

He licks his lips. The DRONES return hauling cookies from all the neighborhood homes.

LEAH
Plenty of cookies now.

SANTA
Not those. Yours.

Leah shrugs. A promise is a promise. She hands him his reward. A tiny piece.

TOM
Come on, the man deserves more than that! A real piece!

When her back is turned, Tom gives Santa a WHOLE cookie.

Tom then fiddles with the interactive MAP on the sleigh's iPad. ALBANY is lit up. Clearly the next stop.

SANTA
That was pretty good. But you know, it didn't hit the spot. What I really want is...

TOM SANTA (CONT'D)
Looks like Albany's next... A CUBANO!

And with that-- the sleigh ROCKETS at warp speed into the atmosphere. Drones trail behind, trying to catch up.

SANTA (CONT'D)
MIAMI BITCHES!!!!

Tom and Leah share an uneasy look.

TOM
(softly)
But, Albany. Those boys and girls are gonna be so sad.

SANTA
Screw Albany.

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - WAR ROOM

Estelle and the other elves drink cocoa. The MAP shows Santa has just taken a sharp turn south. Completely skipping the rest of the North East.

Estelle does a cocoa SPIT TAKE.

ESTELLE
No. No. No no no. Not again.

She covertly nods to another ELF-- DO IT.

He CRANKS a Jack-in-the-Box that emerges from within his console. After some tense jangly music, the Jack POPS-sounding an alarm.

Moments later, ELF TEAM 6 lock steps into the war room. They are basically Jason Bourne elves-- Kevlar, night vision goggles, and well-trained in Krav Maga. Not a smile among them. Their leader SCULLY (the sternest of them all) steps forward.

SCULLY
Reporting.

ESTELLE
Men, we've got a problem. By our computations, Big Red's last scan and known drop was Scarsdale, NY. We believe the Mercer family may have compromised the sleigh which is headed south at 2000 klicks per hour. I want two teams. I'll be leading A team to Scarsdale. Scully, you take B team and retrieve the Swoose Goose.

Beat.

ESTELLE (CONT'D)
Ugh, what a dumb fuckin' name.

SCULLY
Affirmative. B team. Wheels up in 2.

ESTELLE
We don't need wheels where we're going.

Estelle looks to the WALL opposite the MAP.

SEVEN GIANT STOCKINGS. Each with a placard above indicating a continent. Her eyes narrow in on NORTH AMERICA.

CUT TO:

EXT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Above the Mercer's home, in a sky filled with stars, appears a BRAND NEW ONE. Brighter than the rest. And tinted a slight EVERGREEN.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Much smaller stockings are hung by the chimney with care. We hold on them.

Then--

The top of ESTELLE'S HEAD POPS out from a stocking. Then two others on either side. Peeking above the fur trim.

ALL THREE. They slip down NIGHT VISION GOGGLES.

POV: Night vision: Harper's room - EMPTY.

POV: Night vision: Lily's room - EMPTY.

POV: Night vision: Tom and Leah's room - EMPTY.

The elves exchange tactical hand signals.

One ELF runs up to Estelle with a stern look on his face.

ANGLE ON HIS FIST.

The fingers WHIP open to reveal--!

COOKIE CRUMBS.

Estelle sniffs it. Shakes her head.

ESTELLE
Mrs. Claus isn't gonna be happy.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIAMI STREETS - NIGHT

SANTA, in slo-mo, strides out of a TOURIST KIOSK as SEXY AND I KNOW IT by LMFAO plays from a nearby rooftop club.

He's gone full MIAMI. Tommy Bahama shorts. Pink neon plastic wayfarers with FLASHING LED lights shaped like PALM TREES. He's sipping on a PINA COLADA from a PLASTIC CUP with a Krazy Straw. And his shirt proudly reads, in blinding rainbow:

I'M IN MIAMI, BITCH!

He definitely is. On Collins Ave, no less. Art deco and neon war with the tremendous displays of Christmas lights. Also behind him: a hard put Leah. Tom shrugs.

TOM
(silver lining)
At least he blends in.

LEAH
Yeah, but does that?

She points to the SLEIGH and REINDEER hovering above. All now don the same WAYFARERS.

Santa pulls on a Cohiba and--

SANTA
Now who wants a FUCKIN' Cubano?

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN

Estelle and her team are finishing a forensic examination on the kitchen- complete with a test tube for the cookie crumbs and evidence baggies filled with Santa's candy canes.

Buck races in from outside. He holds a baggie filled with reindeer shit.

BUCK
Ma'am. It's Blitzen's. I can tell
from the...

ECU: He starts to point to the detail in the bag.

ESTELLE
THAT'LL DO.

BUCK
(softly)
...doo.

Estelle sighs.

ESTELLE
We need to alert B team.

She taps her earpiece.

ESTELLE (CONT'D)
Scully. Come in.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - MIAMI - NIGHT

Scully and his team pop out of Christmas stockings. Their eyes go wide when they realize they are not in someone's home, but rather a VERY LOUD NIGHT CLUB.

Strobe lights. Bass thumping. Snow machines. And a lot of drunk people with nothing better to do on Christmas eve.

Scantly clad women stumble in heels- one SLOSHES a drink into a stocking, nearly drowning Scully.

He spits it out. Taps his COMM.

SCULLY
(grim)
Copy.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - INTERCUT

ESTELLE
We've got a problem.

SCULLY
So do we. We're within the perimeter. But I think something's gone terribly wrong.

He eyes the club's BARTENDERS. They are LITTLE PEOPLE dressed as ELVES. They carry trays of booze-- nearly getting trampled.

SCULLY (CONT'D)
This place is sick.

ESTELLE
SCULLY.

SCULLY
What is it?

ESTELLE
Big Red.

SCULLY
What about him?

ESTELLE
He's High.

Scully's face drops. He knows what that means.

Close on Estelle- she's deadly serious.

ESTELLE (CONT'D)
On Christmas.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - SOUTH BEACH - NIGHT

Midnight surf washes onto the bare feet of--

SANTA. He's still wearing his Miami get-up, but now in addition to his drink and cigar, he is also cradling a CUBANO sandwich. Inhaling it.

Tom is also enjoying a sandwich. Leah still hasn't fully embraced this weirdness. She has a bottle of water.

SANTA
(mouth full)
It's got ham AND pork. What IS the difference between pork and ham anyway? Is it the cut? What part of the animal? Should I be a vegetarian? Vegan? Paleo? Ayurvedic? Goop?

He shoots back a look at Tom and Leah.

SANTA (CONT'D)
That's right. We have wifi at the North Pole. Gwyneth is my guru.

LEAH
What?

SANTA
I mean not the Jade eggs. But like, her recipes are really good.

LEAH
Wait, the North Pole. Does that mean there are like, elves? Staff? People we can reach out to for help!?

SANTA
(covering)
No, no. It's just me and the Mrs. And our Mistletoe friends. You know, the app.

Tom chokes on his sandwich.

SANTA (CONT'D)

(more frenzied)

The elves were a lie told by the Church because no one wants to believe in miracles other than Jesus. Feed a crowd with a single fish - cool. But deliver every kid on the planet a gift in a single night.

(looks to the sky)

Do that one, Joshua!

LEAH

Alright. Well, if we want to hit Samoa by sunrise, we need to get a move on. No more "but I haven't felt the Atlantic in 30,000 years."

Santa looks back at the city. Over the strip he sees a familiar EVERGREEN STAR POP into the sky.

And where there's that star, ELVES are sure to follow-

SANTA

(covering again)

Ok, yeah yeah. You're right. Uh, we should get going. Let's light this candle.

But Santa instead takes another ANNOYINGLY LONG drink out of his Colada. Like really long. Then SLURPING.

Beat. BELCH. Off they go--

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - BASEMENT

Sasha, Lily and Harper are assembled for their sleepover. Blankets and hot cocoa abound.

HARPER

And he says that I'm his "Shingleback Skink" which at first I thought was like, some sort of insult. But it turns out it's actually this lizard that mates for life. So, does that mean it's real?

Beat.

SASHA

Wait, just back up for a sec. Is his REAL name Hawk?

LILY

NO. He just wants everyone to THINK it is. His real name is HAROLD. He just wants to be different like everyone else.

Lily is lost in her Cocoa. No longer the center of attention, Skittles has started sniffing around the basement.

SASHA

Ok, ok. Harold, Hawk-- he sounds like he really cares about you.

LILY

Not as much as he likes MARY JANE. I hear him talking about her all the time. Harper, no offense but it's kind of stupid that you haven't noticed yet.

Sasha and Harper share a knowing look.

SASHA

Okay then... time for bed. Or else Santa won't come!

LILY

I'm so sick of everyone talking about Santa. Like hi, I know he's not real and that mom and dad buy our presents.

OUTSIDE THE BASEMENT DOOR

An ELF HAND reaches for the knob.

A soft COMM-CLICK--

SCULLY (O.S.)

Commander, come in.

Estelle FREEZES. Hand inches from the knob.

ESTELLE

Copy, what is it?

INTERCUT WITH--

INT. NIGHTCLUB - MIAMI

Now out of the stockings, Scully and his team make their way through the mayhem. The CLUB MANAGER snags Scully by the collar.

MANAGER

You! Where's your tray? We're not paying you to socialize.

Scully growls and pushes past. Heads up some stairs and onto a SMOKING VERANDA.

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

Hey! Get back here!

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - VERANDA - MIAMI - CONTINUOUS

Scully and one of his men (face buried in BINOCULARS) gain a vantage point.

BINOCULARS

Nothing yet.

(beat)

Nothing...

Binoculars keeps scanning.

BINOCULARS (CONT'D)

Wait-- yes! Eyes on Big Red.

SCULLY

(into Comm)

Target has been sighted.

ESTELLE

Alright.

(to team behind her)

Pack it up, boys.

SCULLY

One other thing.

POV through binoculars: Close on SANTA leaving the beach. Then on the COCKTAIL in his hand. Santa DOWNS it in one gulp.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

We're gonna need to wake the Prince of Paz.

Estelle's face drops.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Oblivious to the elves above, the girls continue...

HARPER

Actually, Santa Claus is a secular
rescript of the Egyptian God
Osiris, who after death was said to
have turned into an evergreen tree.

LILY

We get it, Harper. You're going to
college.

HARPER

(ignoring her little
sister)

Each year, people were said to
visit this tree and leave gifts
under it for the dead Gods. We're
all just cogs in the machine, guys.

Sasha rolls her eyes at Harper's philosophizing.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Osiris was actually a protomyth-
figure for Jesus. All our religious
symbols are just morphed from other
ancient crap. Like how the Easter
Bunny is just a con so we all buy
chocolate and egg dye.

LILY

Let me guess, you think the Easter
Bunny is real too?

HARPER

Hey, Lil-- where's your precious
cat?

LILY

Skittles?!

Lily starts to look frantically for the cat.

LILY (CONT'D)

(calling)

Skittles!! Skittles!!

SASHA

Shit.

Lily is now tearing apart the basement. CRYING.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Everyone calm down. We'll find him.

LILY
HER!

Harper spies a window-- cracked open wide enough for a cat to slip out.

HARPER
(to Sasha)
Psst.

Sasha looks-- sees the open window.

SASHA
Who wants to go on an adventure?!

Off her uneasy smile we cut to--

BLACK

We stay in the BLACK.

The sounds of a SWEET ANIMAL SNORING. Little snorts and purrs. Skittles?

The SCRAPE of a match FLARES.

It's lit by ESTELLE. Who, now that we can see her, looks VERY NERVOUS. Not Skittles.

She creeps into an even darker place. It's some sort of--

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

The snoring grows LOUDER.

Estelle creeps closer. Suspense building. Then her COMM crackles.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - MIAMI

Scully is DRAGGED through the club by the Manager.

He's disheveled by the end of his ride to--

INT. NIGHTCLUB - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

MANAGER

You know, I'm no discriminator, okay. I don't judge people by their color, age, or height. You know what I do judge them on?

Scully stares blankly.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Work ethic.

SCULLY

Excuse me?

MANAGER

I saw you out there on the patio-flirting. You think this is some joke, kid?

Just outside the kitchen door, BINOCULARS spies this interaction.

BINOCULARS

(whispering, into COMM)

We've got a problem.

The Manager shoves a tray at Scully.

MANAGER

Get your ass back out there. And bring the jolly.

Scully is shoved out of the kitchen and promptly DUMPS the tray on the ground. Pissed. But before he can rejoin his team, he is SCOOPED up by a drunk MODEL.

She and her MODEL friends ooo and aww over how ADORABLE Scully is. INSTAGRAMMING him. Scully is not happy.

BLONDE MODEL

OMG. I luvvvvv himmm.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

ESTELLE

(whispering, into COMM)

I'm a little busy.

Without waiting for a response, Estelle TURNS OFF her Comm. But it's too late.

The sweet snoring turns to an ANGRY GROWL.

A muscular and furry MASS shifts in the dark.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - MIAMI

All hell is breaking loose, as Scully is bounced between TWERKING ASSES. His COMM flies off.

Binoculars is tapping on his COMM.

BINOCULARS
(yelling)
Hello?! Hello?! This fucking
thing...

Binoculars rips it out of his ear. Reads the LABEL: MADE PROUDLY IN SANTA'S WORKSHOP.

He throws it to the ground.

BINOCULARS (CONT'D)
Piece of crap!

Binoculars does a NECK CRACK. He's gonna have to do this on his own.

EXT. NIGHT SKY

Santa's sleigh hovers over an extremely WEALTHY ISLAND off the coast of Miami. Palatial mansions have plenty of breathing room here.

From the sleigh, the DRONES release. We watch as they descend, delivering their joyful payloads.

Beat. Then a loud BOOM of a SHOTGUN.

ECU: A DRONE EXPLODES and twirls to its demise on a manicured LAWN.

INT. SLEIGH - CONTINUOUS

Santa looks very worried. He throws the Sleigh into NEUTRAL.

SANTA
Brb.

He lifts out of his seat. Freezes.

SANTA (CONT'D)
If you see a green star-- actually,
nevermind.

TOM
Where are you going??

Santa does a few AGILITY STRETCHES.

SANTA
One of my boys went down.

Santa THROWS on his FAMOUS RED COAT over the "I'm in Miami Bitch" tank he still dons.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Gonna have to do this one the old fashioned way.

And with that, he's GONE!

Tom and Leah press their faces against the glass window.

Tom and Leah POV: SANTA. He soars through the night. Halo jumping like Tom Cruise in Mission Impossible: Fall Out.

Soon he's just a red dot on a massive rooftop.

INT. MIAMI MANSION - NIGHT

Holy Scarface, Batman - everything in here is lacquered, glossy and white. White marble meets white rugs meet white walls meet white paintings.

But there in the middle is a big Red man.

He pats his pockets. Oh shit! No presents.

He stares out a massive floor-to-ceiling window: there, just outside, is the busted drone with a few presents scattered nearby.

EXT. MIAMI MANSION - NIGHT

From the shadows, Santa pops his head. Looks clear.

But we see what he's doesn't: two burly and well-armed security guards pacing the perimeter.

Santa's off, rushing across the lawn --

He's got a present in one hand, reaching for the second.

But he freezes when he hears the blood-thirsty SNARL of a rapidly-approaching GUARD DOG--

It's inches away. He swipes the second gift and books it back to the house.

BIRDSEYE POV: A dot of red is chased by a vicious dog.

INT. SLEIGH - CONTINUOUS

LEAH
(looking down)
He's got this, right?

TOM
Yeah, plenty of people have dogs.
It's like mailmen. Part of the job,
right?

LEAH
Yeah, totally.

INT. MIAMI MANSION - NIGHT

In that same room, we look out the window. It must be sound-proof because it's silent but we see:

-Santa splat against the window like an ACME cartoon.

-Santa dodging back and forth, dog at his heels.

-The dog satisfied, rips into Santa's coat.

Santa strolls calmly, sans coat, back across the glass.

Moments later, he's with us, kneeling by a white-tinsel, white-globed, white-light, white Christmas tree.

He shakes off the dirt and re-bends a toy back into shape. Places them delicately just as--

In his periphery, his eye snags a perfect WHITE MOUND of what you can only imagine is grade-A Columbian marching powder.

It's like the softest snow Santa's ever seen.

His nose overrides his sense of duty - he haphazardly tosses the presents behind him and beelines for the coke.

Through the window behind him, again we see what he's missing: a guard approaches the dog. Picks up the red coat. Looks around.

Somehow within seconds, Santa has scraped the drugs into a PERFECTLY SYMMETRICAL SNOWFLAKE. He's an artist.

And within moments, he's a VERY HIGH artist.

So high and so artistic, he doesn't notice on the landing above:

IN WHITE DESIGNER LINGERIE AND A FLOWING WHITE SILK ROBE: a Goddess of the Underworld-- CRISTINA.

She towers in her furry white kitten heels.

CRISTINA
What the fuck is this?

Santa, nose fully white, turns his head just as the guards and more dogs flood in, blocking all exits.

SANTA
I know what this looks like. But here's the thing. I'm Santa.
(beat)
Papa Noel?

He puts his hands up.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Now that I'm looking around, I don't know how Jaime or Elena got on the nice list.

CRISTINA
(furious)
You stalk my family? Who are you - with the Zetas?
(to guards)
Get him now.

The guards approach, guns cocked, cornering Santa. The tree at his back.

SANTA
(to self)
Oh -- this is some Sicario bullshit.

Miraculously, he snatches his coat from the nearest guard, reaches behind and squirrel-scales the Christmas tree, launching off the Jesus at the top--

And onto the landing beside her.

SANTA (CONT'D)
(doubletakes her shoes)
Christmas '85, right?

She's caught off-guard: who is this -- as she clocks her shoes.

Looking back up, he's vanished.

EXT. MIAMI MANSION - LOWER ROOF - NIGHT

Twenty feet of custom glass that serves as a gorgeous sliding door.

Over the Sex Pistols rendition of JINGLE BELLS, and in slow motion, CRASH --

Santa hurls through the window, somehow sticking his landing.

He looks up to see-

The SLEIGH awaiting. Tom and Leah are standing just outside of it, in mid-debate.

SANTA
(yelling)
Good thinking, guys!

TOM
...think he knows what he's
do--

All their eyes meet.

SANTA
Blitzen. Vixen. Comet--

The reindeer all start to paw the roof. It's on again.

He continues naming names as he charges toward the sleigh.

SANTA (CONT'D)
(slo-mo voice)
Get in the fu--

He eats total shit, his belly slamming into the roof.

POOOOOOF

A growing cloud of white powder billows from his dog-torn coat.

LEAH
Is that cocaine--

Guards and dogs start to assemble.

Tom grabs Santa and they all tumble into the sleigh, just escaping.

Barely in the air, bullets whiz past the careening sleigh.

SANTA

(warp speed)

You guys wouldn't believe. They had a white tree. I always wonder about white trees. Do they paint em white? Are they grown? Are they plastic? Or some sort of polycarbonate? I mean white tree right. Game of Thrones? You guys watch it? Want to know my favorite episode...

Tom leans over to Leah.

TOM

(re: if it was cocaine)

Yeah.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

The large furry creature from before is now fully lit by a lantern.

ECU: A pair of SHAKING PAWS grip a mug of HOT COFFEE. The fur on these paws isn't real, it's not CG, it's synthetic costume fur. He speaks with a THICK NEW YORK ACCENT.

EASTER BUNNY (O.C.)

What could be so important...

On her tinsel-trimmed iPad, Estelle timidly summons CCTV footage of Santa in Miami, CLEARLY FUCKED UP--

- Stealing that CUBANO from a food truck.
- Dropping an ALLIGATOR down a CHIMNEY.
- Harassing a MALL SANTA.
- Openly brandishing a bottle of JACK DANIELS as he stumbles down the street.

The Easter Bunny has been watching this with his head still down. He FLINGS the iPad across the cave. It lands, screen CRACKED.

Estelle flashes a "what gives" face.

His head slowly rises and we see his FACE for the first time.

This bunny is no bullshit, even if he IS wearing a full on BUNNY COSTUME- think Chandler in *Friends*.

Around his neck hangs a black SLEEPING EYE MASK with letters that read: "FUCK OFF."

EASTER BUNNY (CONT'D)
Christmas is gefickt.

He LIGHTS UP a CAMEL CIGARETTE.

EASTER BUNNY (CONT'D)
When this guy gets high, he's
useless.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - ARKANSAS - NIGHT

Actually, not at all. That cocaine has Santa working MIRACLES.

The sleigh hovers over a bevy of trailers, each strung with Christmas lights.

The drones descend onto one section, but Santa's doubling his efficiency by handling the neighboring town at the same time.

Through a combination of parkour, jump shots and Cirque du Soleil acrobatics, Santa is getting it DONE.

INT. SLEIGH - CONTINUOUS

Tom and Leah marvel at the sleigh's dash-- it is a MAP of the United States. Each state is either lit up (still to be done) or dark (completed). The entire Northeast is DARK and the southeast is RAPIDLY becoming that way.

LEAH
This just might work.

Like a COWBOY, Santa RIDES up to the sleigh on a flying BLITZEN. Swoops past Tom and Leah for a HIGH FIVE.

SANTA
(southern accent)
Get 'er dun!

Santa zips off like a falling star.

TOM
What happens when Santa comes down?

LEAH

Hopefully not another plague.

SANTA

Done!

Whoa-- Santa is already back in the sleigh.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Crash? This thing has sensor-assist. Can't crash. You guys, at this rate, I may even beat my all time record. 1918.

TOM

What happened then?

SANTA

Spanish Flu.

Santa suddenly looks really sad.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Killed off a hundred million people. So... less presents to deliver.

Leah starts clapping her hands to shake him out of it.

LEAH

(hyping up the energy)

Good vibes, good vibes. Where to next?

SANTA

I think it's time we put a bow on the States. I'm feeling a little international...

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - WAR ROOM

Easter Bunny, Estelle and the rest of her team stare at the world map. There are now several hazard lights dotting the US. Some flashing yellow, some blinking red-- various alarms sound.

ESTELLE

(to the room)

We've got misdelivered presents in Sector A, children who need memory wipes in Sector B, literal fires to put out in --well, multiple places-- and most importantly, we need an extraction of Scully and his team from that hellhole in Miami.

Elves begin to scatter into various stockings, off to save the holiday.

Easter Bunny stares into the middle-distance, trying to wrap his head around a problem that's only getting bigger.

EASTER BUNNY

(to Estelle)

How did this happen? He's been sober 680 years. Everything ok with the missus?

MRS. CLAUS (O.C.)

No. It's not.

They all spin around and we see:

MRS. CLAUS. White hair in braids. Red dress. Pissed off.

EASTER BUNNY

Mrs. Claus! Didn't see you there.

MRS. CLAUS

Clearly.

EASTER BUNNY

So this was all caused by some sort of fight?

MRS. CLAUS

(mocking, sniveling voice)

"So this was all caused by some sort of--" No! You think this is my first rodeo, Bugs?

Easter grimaces at the nickname, clearly not a fan.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

Things were great when he left.

Gave him his Christmas Eve massage--

EASTER BUNNY

Ok, I don't need any more details.

MRS. CLAUS

But that man made a promise to me 680 years ago. To be sober. He carried the weight of the world on his shoulders - he never took care of himself. So he had to lose himself in booze. And pills. And heroin. And ayahuasca. And cloves. I thought he'd figured it all out. But, no, tonight he broke that promise. So, no. Everything's definitely NOT okay.

A tiny hand tugs on her dress. Mrs. Claus looks down.

It's Buck, the elf we met earlier.

BUCK

'Scuse me, ma'am. He may have broken that promise, but I don't think he meant to...

Mrs. Claus assesses Buck.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh get your head out of Kris' ass, Buck. Covering him won't get you a raise.

ESTELLE

Ma'am- he's new. Doesn't know his place yet.

Mrs. Claus turns to her, readying a venomous volley.

EASTER BUNNY

(cutting in)

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Everybody take one in.

(beat while breathing)

Alright, let's hear what the little guy has to say.

All the elves look at the Bunny with a "screw you" glance.

As Buck speaks, the screen behind him displays a CSI-like analysis of the cookie, the location, etc.

BUCK

(shivering)

Ok. We found distinct traces of THC in the cookies left at the Scarsdale location.

On screen, the cookie: beside it are all the component chemical formulas present within. THC is at 99%

BUCK (CONT'D)
From initial testing, we believe the sample to be of Haitian origin. Highly potent. Traditionally used in shamanic trance.

He's nerding out. A blank stare from Mrs. Claus--

He chills, finally reading the room.

BUCK (CONT'D)
The man was simply doing his job, delivering presents and eating cookies, when BAM! he was dosed. You remember the Mercers?

They all nod knowingly.

BUCK (CONT'D)
I suspect they are at the root of this. Not only have they gotten Big Red FUCKED out of his mind, but they also commandeered the Swoose Goose and are taking him on a drug-fueled boondoggle across hell's half acre.

EASTER BUNNY
(disgusted)
Filthy animals.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - MIAMI - NIGHT

Buck and the rest of Estelle's extraction team peer in through the WINDOWS.

POV: Inside, Scully, Binoculars and the rest of his team are ALL carrying drink trays. Clearly loosing this battle.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - MIAMI - CONTINUOUS

A BODY BUILDING DOUCHE slams a glass on Binoculars' tray. The force topples him, shot glasses SMASHING on the floor.

DOUCHE
C'mon, Leprechaun. Show me that pot of gold.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - MIAMI

Estelle covers the eyes of one of her extraction team.

ESTELLE

Don't look.

PISSED, Buck rolls a SMOKE CANISTER in through the window.

Seconds later, the entire club is filled with fog.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - MIAMI

Models, douches and sad people all race OUTSIDE.

Buck and his team hoist their enslaved waiter compadres and fire-carry them through the fog.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - MIAMI

Clubgoers continue to cough in the street. Rolling around, thongs a-gleaming.

Bad Boys style, Estelle, Scully, Buck, Binoculars and the rest slo-mo stroll away from the club. When--

BOOM!!!

It goes up in flames. Nobody looks back.

Scully hit his new COMM. Slams a lone shot.

SCULLY

Get me Zuck. We need a favor.

INT. MARK ZUCKERBERG'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A sleepy Zuck answers his cell. Ok - we cop that we might not get Zuckerberg to be in this film, but maybe Eisenberg is available? Zit cream dots his face.

ZUCK

I can't do that. Controlling the user's content goes against everything I, Facebook, and Instagram stand for.

SCULLY

We'll give you the drone contract next year.

ZUCK
But Bezos--

SCULLY
Fuck Bezos.

ZUCK
Fine.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - MIAMI

The burnt husk of the club fades into the far distance now.

SCULLY
Let's go get our man.

The team looks at their iPad MAP.

BINOCULARS
Nearest extraction point--

On the iPad a green tactical outline of a CHRISTMAS STOCKING POPS UP--

BINOCULARS (CONT'D)
--Two blocks due east.

They slip down their night vision goggles and head off.

EXT. SCARSDALE STREET - NIGHT

Bundled in winter wear, Sasha and the girls wave flashlights, searching for the lost cat.

Unbeknownst to all, Daniel swoops overhead.

A "LEAH'S A BITCH" echoes in the night.

HARPER
So tell us more about the time you married a Rockefeller.

SASHA
No. In fact, let's not tell your mom I shared any of that with you guys. Especially the part about Elon's yacht.
(change)
You know, you guys should spend more time communing with nature. The trees. The wind. The moon.

Sasha takes another swig from her trusty wine.

SASHA (CONT'D)
I mean, maybe you do, but it can
never be too much.

LILY
Do you live in a tent, Aunt Sasha?

SASHA
At times.

HARPER
See, that's cool. Why can't Mom be
a little bit more like you? Was she
ever cool? She's such a hardass
now.

SASHA
Harper-- your mom is not a hardass.
Well, actually I have no idea if
she is. But, she's worked that *hard
ass* off to give you all a good life
- including a rare Bengal cat -
(daggers at Lily)
so-- cut her some slack.

HARPER
I just don't get it. How did you
guys end up so different?

Sasha thinks for a moment.

SASHA
Well how did you two end up so
different?

Harper is at a loss. Sasha looks at Lily.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Honestly, I don't even know that
much about you, Lily. The last time
I met you, you were still in
diapers. I can see you grew out of
those. So, Ms. Fancy Pants, tell me
about Lily.

Lily stops, staring up at Sasha. Shines her light directly in
Sasha's eyes.

LILY
Well, first of all, I have a
missing cat.

SASHA

I'm hearing a lot of negativity right now. Where's that coming from?

Lily looks at the ground, shut down.

Harper leans in.

LILY

I just realized that if I wanted to be heard, I had to be loud.

(beat, admission to self)

And I never wanted to get picked on again.

HARPER

Again, Lil?

LILY

It's whatever. Some kids were mean to me last year. So I did what I had to do to fit in.

HARPER

Why didn't you come to me?

LILY

You were busy and happy with drum circles and whatever a "Skink bike" is--

HARPER

(quick to her own defense)
It's a bike Hawk is making for Burning Man! It's a lizard bike!

SASHA

Oh cool! You guys are doing Burning Ma-- wait, no.

She refocuses.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Lily, the deepest people I've ever met were the outsiders. There's power in that. Don't discount who you are just because it's not "cool". If this isn't who you are, then don't be this person.

Sasha gives Harper a look as to say "this is for you too."

SASHA (CONT'D)

Honestly, nobody is happy growing up. And the people who you think ARE- are probably the most deeply fuc-- unhappy ones of all.

LILY

That doesn't make me feel better really.

(Beat)

I only wanted the Bengal because Jackie got one.

SASHA

Well, Jackie's probably got ADHD and a broken home. You've got two amazing parents and a sister and (she smiles)

An aunt -- who all love you very much.

LILY

Even if I'm not popular?

SASHA

Being popular doesn't matter. Take it from someone who was invited to Gigi Hadid's llama's quinceañera-- being "in" isn't always fun.

HARPER

How was that not fun?

SASHA

The llama got food poisoning-- don't ask for more details. It gets dark. Anyway-- the point is--

She's interrupted by a BENGAL SCREAMING out of a tree, feathers fluttering down into the snow.

SASHA (CONT'D)

I think we found Skittles.

Glances down at the bloody rainbow of feathers.

SASHA (CONT'D)

And perhaps Daniel.

A WOUNDED SQUAWK OF "STOP IT" trails into the distance.

Beat.

LILY

I think I'm done "communing with nature."

EXT. GLOBE

Over a spinning globe a-la films from the 1920's and with CHUCK BERRY'S RUN RUDOLPH RUN at full blast, we punch-in on Santa delivering gifts in Italy, England, Japan, Australia, Madagascar - it's a whirlwind.

On their tail, not far behind is ELF TEAM 6.

We swoop down on--

EXT. SLEIGH - OVER CAIRO EGYPT - NIGHT

Santa is off delivering the last of the Coptic presents. Just Tom and Leah in the sleigh. Then Tom spots in the distance--

One of the last remaining Ancient Wonders of the World.

THE PYRAMIDS OF GIZA. Sandy bricks layered into perfect points. Under a sky somehow even more ancient.

TOM

Leah!

He points at the pyramids.

TOM (CONT'D)

We NEED to take a photo. I mean, come on.

Leah checks her watch.

LEAH

We already blew most of the night in Miami-- we're still way behind schedule--

TOM

It's the pyramids!!

He pulls out the crumpled bag of cookies- basically like Dorito dust now.

TOM (CONT'D)

A little wonder-dust perhaps?

Santa plops back into the driver's seat. Licks a finger and DIPS it into the bag.

SANTA
Don't mind if I do!

LEAH
Have you been feeding him cookies?

Tom's sheepish glance says everything.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Typical. If it weren't for me, I'd come home and find the girls missing, the house robbed and you baking fucking Christmas cookies in your underwear.

TOM
I knew you didn't want me to bake those cookies.

LEAH
Because of your cookies, we're in this mess.

She takes a big breath- calming herself.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Look-- I'm just starting to feel like myself again. Don't need to go back down that road. Besides-- kids at home-- WITH SASHA. We gotta keep moving. Come on.

Leah's so busy being her type A self that she completely misses Tom's utter disappointment.

He SNAPS a photo on his phone as the sleigh rockets off into the night.

ANGLE ON THE PHONE

The photo is just a sad blur. A lost moment.

Even more sad, he dips a finger of wonder-dust.

We PULL OUT from the sleigh. As it moves through the sky, it looks just like a SHOOTING STAR. Sparkling in the night.

We SLOWLY track down from that light-- miles of DARKNESS. Then the soft fuzz of LIGHT POLLUTION enters the frame.

Now, nearing the ground, a MANGER DISPLAY. There's a quaint, almost holy aura emanating from the scene.

Then upon closer inspection, we notice that two of the animals - TWO DONKEYS - are HUMPING. One mounting the other.

Then the SNICKER of TWO TEENS laughing. We see them scatter off into the distance. Clearly this was their doing.

We hold on the manger-- then disembodied, we continue to TRACK DOWN--

Deep into the earth.

Layers of

-- DIRT --

-- STONE --

-- CAVEMAN & ALIEN SKELETONS --

-- DINO FOSSILS --

Then finally, we come to a--

INT. HOLLOW SPACE - EASTER BUNNY'S TUNNEL - NIGHT

It's a TUNNEL lit by GREEN, PINK, YELLOW and BLUE lightbulbs strung atop the narrow ceiling.

Assembled in formation are ALL our elves: Estelle, Buck, Scully, Binoculars and others. Giving them their marching orders is--

EASTER BUNNY

Back at headquarters, we assessed his trajectory. It's grim. He's all over the place. Europe one minute, Africa the next. Apparently he even delivered gifts to some PENGUINS--

Estelle shakes her head.

ESTELLE

Fucking penguins. Belly sliding rats.

Buck starts to breath heavy. Claustrophobic.

EASTER BUNNY

At this point, our best bet is this underground system. I've been digging it for the last 9 centuries.

Bunny pats the wall hard.

EASTER BUNNY (CONT'D)
Perfect. Well lit, efficient, and
flawlessly constructed to withstand
natural disasters. Those
billionaires with their Doomsday
Bunkers have nothing on this shit.

Binoculars spins his finger-- wrap it up.

Buck is now hyperventilating.

EASTER BUNNY (CONT'D)
Alright--

Estelle consults her tinsel-trimmed IPAD.

ESTELLE
He's somewhere over the Atlantic.
Bearing down on Argentina.

Easter Bunny has a knowing look.

EASTER BUNNY
He could never resist a--

EXT. SLEIGH - ABOVE BUENOS AIRES - NIGHT

ECU: a row of perfect teeth sinking into the flaky crust of

SANTA
EMPANADA!

Crumbs scatter from his mouth. At this point, his beard looks like a sad buffet: residue from every food he's eaten. Gravy on his torn-up jacket, shell of an escargot peeking out of his white chest hair and now EMPANADA beef spilling over his Miami shirt.

He offers a bite to Tom who exaggeratedly chomps at the pastry. Santa feeds him as Leah is busy launching drones.

Tight on SANTA- the joy from the empanada starts to fade. He breathes heavy. Lets out a big BELCH. Then looks REALLY UNHAPPY.

SANTA (CONT'D)
I don't feel so good.

TOM
(still psyched)
What do you mean? This shit is
delicious!

LEAH
(mocking)
Ohhh! Is someone's DOPAMINE finally
drained?? Serotonin depleted??

Santa pays her no attention.

SANTA
It's like my skin is crawling and
my stomach feels dirty. I feel
dirty. It's like... like all the
Christmas Spirit in the world is
gone.

LEAH

SANTA TOM
Mrs. Claus... Leah, chill. Clearly he
doesn't feel good.

TOM (CONT'D)
Maybe some more wonder dust...

LEAH
That's his PROBLEM, Tom! He needs to get this out of his system! And if we want to finish by dawn, wake up back in our beds, and forget this nightmare, then we need to move!

TOM

A mess?? A nightmare?? What are you talking about?? This has been one of the most amazing nights I've ever had! And I thought *you* were having it with me.

In the BG, Santa is crying softly. Hunched into a ball. Torn coat draped over him.

LEAH
Amazing? I've been babysitting BOTH
of you all night! It's not like
we're in COLLEGE anymore.

TOM

Yeah, you're right. Because in college I fell in love with someone totally different. You were fun. Goofy. Curious. Now you're just... LUMPY.

Leah's jaw drops.

LEAH

Are you fucking kidding? I take care of this family- working- while you "chill at home with the kids" - who are LEARNING at school. So I don't even know what that means.

TOM

I may not have a high powered career, but all you do is package the world and sell it to others. Like the world needs more iPod toilet paper docks. Shit while you sing.

(clapping)

Great stuff, Leah. Real brilliant. You know what? No wonder they took the Christmas account away.

LEAH

Low blow, Tom.

TOM

No, it's true. You don't get that it doesn't matter what's in the box. It matters who gave it to you. And we were given this incredible gift tonight - and you're fucking it up.

LEAH

Cool, Tom. I had my stoner epiphany phase, too, but glad you're getting here now. Just remember, that doesn't make you an expert in psychology, me or the fucking meaning of Christmas. Speaking of, all this Christmas 'wisdom' is coming from the man who demands gift receipts for every present. So very Christmas of you.

Cricket. Cricket.

We pull out to see Santa now standing, just STARING at them. He puts his hands up defensively and tip-toes backwards.

SANTA

Awwwwwkward. I'll let you have a minute...

LEAH

No, not awkward. Done. Santa, let's put her down. I'm getting out.

SANTA

This is so not Christmas, you guys. Not a cool yule.

TOM

No, if she wants out. Let her out. She can walk back to Scarsdale.

LEAH

OR I'll just use MY money that I make at MY "high-powered" -- what was it? -- package the world and sell it to others -- CAREER? Yeah, I'll use that money.

TOM

LET THE WOMAN OFF.

Santa has the face of an Uber driver with a couple fighting in the back seat.

SANTA

Alright, alright...

Santa puts the sleigh in gear and sets it down on the ROOF of an apartment complex.

EXT. BUENOS AIRES - APARTMENT ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Santa hops out of the sleigh and onto the roof. Does some agility stretches. CRACKS his back.

SANTA

I'll give you guys some privacy.

Still in the sleigh, Tom and Leah stand off-- staring daggers at each other. Finally Tom breaks.

TOM

Ok, come on. This is stupid.

Before Leah can respond, Santa starts YELLING--

SANTA
INCOMINGGGGG!!

LEAH
What the--

Tom and Leah turn to see Santa SPRINTING to the edge of the roof. As he runs, he (SLO MO, of course) removes his SANTA JACKET (remember, the one the dog tore up).

Tom and Leah look to see what has Santa freaking the fuck out. Of course, it's:

THE EASTER BUNNY

With a team of elves in Kevlar.

They stand like the cast of *Fast and Furious* posing for a promo shot. All attitude. Fur and hair blowing in the wind. Ready to kick some ass.

TOM
(to Santa)
I thought there were no elves.

But Santa hasn't missed a beat.

SANTA
On Dancer on Prancer on...

He's starting the engine. But he's not getting onboard.

Leah and Tom are off into the night sky. But below--

He takes his Suit Jacket and wraps it over a utility line leading to a lower ROOF.

Santa LOOKS back at his pursuers and TOUCHES HIS NOSE. WINKS. Signature Santa move.

SCULLY
Did he just say what I THINK he just said?

ESTELLE
Yep, that son of a bitch flipped us the Arctic bird.

With another wink, Santa ALIAS-SLIDES down the power line and into the night.

Well, except that jacket has A LOT of holes in it. And with the friction from the slide, it isn't holding up well.

ECU: The fibers fray and snap.

ECU: Santa looks worried.

ECU: The fibers snap more.

And then--

RRRRRRIP

The jacket finally gives way and he PLUMMETS into an open dumpster.

SANTA (O.C.)
(from the dumpster)
This was not my intention.

HIGH ABOVE, Leah and Tom watch as the Bunny and Elves apprehend Saint Nick.

Or almost -

TOM
I think he's free--

Santa jukes and is on the run, covered in foul trash. But not for long.

His pants sink to his knees and the Bunny body-tackles him.

TOM & LEAH
(canned reaction)
Oooohhhh...

ON THE STREET, the Easter Bunny looks his old friend dead in the eye.

EASTER BUNNY
It's over, man.

Santa collapses into a hug.

EASTER BUNNY (CONT'D)
I got you.
(to Estelle, re: the
sleigh)
Bring it down.

But the sleigh is long gone.

EXT. NIGHT SKY - NIGHT

The sleigh zips through heavenly climes.

INT. SLEIGH - NIGHT

Tom and Leah sit in silence, avoiding the real conversation.

Heavy beat.

TOM
(throws hands up)
So how about that Seal Team of
Elves?

LEAH
I guess they came to rescue him? Or
put him in jail? Definitely one of
those two.

A moment while they both let the guilt of abandoning a friend sink in.

TOM
I mean, he wasn't doing so hot.
It's probably good that he gets
some help.

LEAH
Plus he was slowing us down anyway.

He smiles at the acknowledgement of "us".

TOM
You ready to do this, Leah? You
ready to save Christmas with me?

LEAH
Let's just go. This is for the
kids. Not you.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - BASEMENT

Back from their mission, the girls reassemble in the basement. Skittles wrapped in a Pendleton blanket.

SASHA
I'm sure Daniel's fine.
(diverting)
Hey Harper, pass me those cards.

Harper hands Sasha the TAROT CARDS.

After a quick shuffle, Sasha fans out the cards.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Pick one.

Harper draws a card-- It's THE WORLD card. A woman holding two wands inside a laurel wreath.

SASHA (CONT'D)
This is a great card. The World. Completion, integration, accomplishment, travel. For you, I think this about coming to terms with where you come from. And where you're going.

HARPER
What do you mean?

SASHA
Well, it's about integrating those two things. So you've got your spirituality on lock, but you need to be true to the rest of it. You know, your drive to be great. Not just to have fun, but to accomplish something. Your mom is great at that. I think you should look to her for that strength.

Sasha realizes this is a message she could learn from as well.

SASHA (CONT'D)
And, yes- your mom and I are REALLY different. But we're always there for each other when it matters.
(to both of them)
I know you guys will do the same for each other.

LILY
You mean like, lend her my soap?

Harper gives Lily a big hug.

EXT. GLOBE - NIGHT

The sleigh zips between the remaining countries and cities. On the dash, lights go out in record time.

INT. SLEIGH

Tom and Leah are now a well-oiled machine. He's flying, she's controlling the drones.

It's a beautiful display of teamwork and patience. A skill well honed by those who've been married this long: putting bullshit aside for the sake of a greater cause.

LEAH

This is it.

TOM

Last stop. Couldn't have done it without you.

Leah's not ready to kiss and make up just yet.

LEAH

I know you couldn't have.

EXT. SLEIGH - HIGH ABOVE NEW ZEALAND COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Carols echo through the sky. Leah's ears perk up. Tom clocks this.

They look out the window to see they are directly above a small candlelit CHURCH.

Tom knows what this means to Leah, even though we don't yet.

TOM

The drones are doing the work.
They'll be back in--

He pulls her wrist over - reads her watch.

TOM (CONT'D)

2 minutes and 35 seconds.

Leah lets on a slight smile but still yanks her hand back.
Still not there yet.

Tom lands the sleigh.

EXT. PENTECOSTAL CHURCH - NIGHT

Tom and Leah stand outside the wooden double doors of this chapel in the middle of nowhere. Taking it in.

The CAROLS are louder, along with a couple assorted HOOTS.

The flickering light just makes it all so damn serene.

TOM

It's your time. Screw your Jewish upbringing!

Leah: what?

TOM (CONT'D)
No, no. Not SCREW your Jewish
upbringing-- I mean, so what that
you were raised to be Jewish? That
day at the 82nd Street Cathedral.

Leah is impressed at Tom's ability to recall such details.

TOM (CONT'D)
That's right, I remember. The
important things. You went in
because the singing was so
beautiful, and your nanny ripped
you out of there and sent you on
your way to yet another Bar
Mitzvah. I listen. And you know
what, you deserve to get your carol
on- Moses be damned.

Leah looks at him again.

TOM (CONT'D)
I know -- I know, just--

Tom pushes the door open to--

INT. PENTECOSTAL CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Tom and Leah sidle into the back pew of the church.

Leah beams as she joins a rousing rendition of O HOLY NIGHT.
Tom mumbles along.

It's a redemptive moment... their hands almost touch but are--

Interrupted by A HISSING, COILED POISONOUS SNAKE --

Being passed by A LOCAL. Who is VERY intent on Tom proving
his worth.

LOCAL
Prove yourself in the eyes of the
Lord.

Tom is dead sober now.

TOM
(as calm as possible)
I'm allergic.

Tom and Leah share a glance-- time to get the hell out.

Especially as another SNAKE is passed to Leah.

They're surrounded by venom and old time religion.

LEAH
(to other churchgoer)
Oh, I had one earlier.

Meanwhile, on the other side, Local is not kind to a no.

Tom reels back, knocking over the candelabra.

The church falls to a hush. Then FLAMES lick a curtain.

ECU: serpentine eyes flicker with orange and yellow. Primal.

Local's snake is now terrified. It whips back and strikes him, teeth sinking into his jugular.

LOCAL
(blood spurting)
I'm not worthy!

Like a horrific domino effect, one by one, snakes turn on the holy, while Tom and Leah leap a python to escape.

NOW ABOVE THE FRAY

EXT. SLEIGH - HIGH ABOVE NEW ZEALAND COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Leah and Tom watch as the church becomes a funeral pyre. Snakes slither off into the night.

INT. SLEIGH - HIGH ABOVE NEW ZEALAND COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Tom looks to Leah.

TOM
I think that's enough caroling for one lifetime.

LEAH
I don't know- I think Scarsdale could use a Pentecostal church.

She sneaks her hand around his shoulder, pretends her hand is a snake and STRIKES at his neck.

LEAH (CONT'D)
SSSSSSSSSS!

He playfully SNAKES back with his hand.

TOM
SSSSSSSSSS!

His snake "eats" hers and they both pause-- he is now HOLDING HER HAND.

TOM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. Everything I said before. I was a dick. No excuses-- drugs or not, you deserve better than that. Without you there wouldn't be a Christmas this year.

She softens.

LEAH
I was maybe a little harsh too. This isn't a nightmare. Maybe a little mess. Maybe a really really really weird pot dream-- but it has been fun.

TOM
You know it sort of reminds me of?

LEAH
The time you stayed up after you took Ambien? And made sock puppets out of my West Elm dish towels?

Tom thinks.

TOM
Well kinda, yeah. But I was thinking about that Christmas at school. We ordered Chinese from Wo Hop and drank Natty Lite on the roof of your dorm.

LEAH
(remembering)
Ah yes, the night I realized you cheat at cards.

TOM
Go Fish champ-- undefeated since 1993.

They laugh.

LEAH
God, we were BROKE.

TOM

Yeah I never told you, but I did a psych experiment that month -- that's how I paid for the Chinese food. Now I smell colors at times but it was worth it.

LEAH

(laughing)
Rough times.

TOM

But it was fun. Amazing what you can do with just a deck of cards and great company.

LEAH

Yeah, I guess the holidays really aren't about the best tree or lights or most presents or pasture-raised organic egg nog. Or procuring an endangered cat for our 7 year old daughter.

They both are a little ashamed at the realization that this is who they've become.

TOM

All that matters is our family. I love you.

He seductively (for a dad) does the "faux-yawn" arm reach around Leah's shoulder.

TOM (CONT'D)

(fake smarmy)

So... you think this thing has cruise control for the ride home?

CUT TO:

EXT. SLEIGH - HIGH ABOVE NEW ZEALAND COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

The sleigh's a-rockin. Windows fogged up. A-la TITANIC:

LEAH'S HAND

Streaks the steam.

Then a miniature fist--

KNOCK KNOCK

The sleigh stops rocking. Muffled voices from within.

ZSSSSST

The window rolls down. Tom and Leah try to look innocent like everyone does when they've just been pulled over.

They are looking straight at:

A CLASSIC SANTA SLEIGH

Like the ones from the Coca-Cola ad. Not modern like the one they're in.

At the ready is THE FULL MARTIAL MIGHT OF ELF TEAM 6. Led by ESTELLE. They all aim rifles and sneers at the couple.

ESTELLE
STEP OUT OF THE LAPLANDER.
(beat)
THE SLEIGH.

Beat.

TOM
Uhhh-- we can't.

He mimes flying- batting his arms like wings and shaking his head no: "We can't fly."

ESTELLE
Fine. Land the vehicle.

Beat.

ESTELLE (CONT'D)
And put some clothes on for Pete's sake. It's CHRISTMAS.

EXT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - ROOF - NIGHT

Both sleighs are parked on the roof. Estelle and her team reprimand Tom and Leah. Buck feeds very hungry reindeer. Binoculars is disinfecting the sleigh's interior. Spraying new car smell.

ESTELLE
Two civilians commandeering Red
Force 1.
(MORE)

ESTELLE (CONT'D)

What can I say-- this hasn't happened since Tim Allen stole the sleigh, pretended to be Santa and made a shitty Christmas movie for Disney.

Tom and Leah nod, remembering the movie.

ESTELLE (CONT'D)

The punishment is usually death by polar bear, though-- we are running low on those these days...

A moment of sadness for climate change.

ESTELLE (CONT'D)

Anyway, even though there's quite a bit of collateral damage -- we've dispatched the entire workshop to clean up your mess-- you DID complete the run on time. You saved Christmas, even if Santa's gonna be spending the New Year at Passages. So-- we'll let you live.

Tom and Leah nod vociferously. Scared shitless.

ESTELLE (CONT'D)

Alright. Well uh, Merry Christmas.
Oh, almost forgot.

She removes THE MIB CANDY CANE to wipe their memories.

She's futzing with it when... from behind, Binoculars CLEARS HIS THROAT.

BINOCULARS

Ma'am.

Estelle looks back at Binoculars who holds up an iPHONE-- it's a FaceTime call. On the screen is--

SANTA!

For the first time, he looks sheepish and innocent. A big BUNNY PAW on his shoulder.

Estelle nods reluctantly, approving the call.

Binoculars brings the iPhone to Tom and Leah so they can talk to their friend.

SANTA

Estelle - put that down.

Estelle re-seals the Candy Cane.

SANTA (CONT'D)

These guys are real champs. Tom, Leah - you're on the all-time nice list. I'm sorry if I wasn't the Santa you expected. I'm sorry about the Mistletoe App... the drug lord...the-- You know what, just all of it. I really just want to thank you guys. I couldn't have done it without you. Don't forget - you make each other better. And without either of you, Christmas would have been a dumpster fire of a holiday. A real flaming pile. So anyway- thanks.

Tom and Leah nod -- "you're welcome."

SANTA (CONT'D)

One more thing. WE NEVER SPEAK OF THIS AGAIN.

With that, the call disconnects.

Tom and Leah share a quizzical look.

LEAH

Again?

EXT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - DAY

The first time we've seen daylight in this movie.

And it's beautiful-- like we are trapped inside of the best snow-globe ever made. A perfect Faberge Christmas morning.

INT. MERCER HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - DAY

Leah, over the stove, finishes up a hearty helping of bacon, eggs and pancakes. No Haitian miracle this time.

Without a word, Tom seamlessly plates the food. It's that thing married couples do -- teamwork without the need for verbal communication.

As Tom delivers the first plate to the kitchen table--

Lily, Harper and Sasha sleepily trudge up from the basement.

Full of yawns and eye rubs.

Leah gives a knowing smile to her sister-- "thanks."

Sasha nods back. More familial semaphore.

The kids all take their plates and the family settles in for breakfast.

Otis Redding's "Merry Christmas Baby" plays over as:

- Lily gives a piece of bacon to Tom.
- Sasha and Harper share a laugh.
- Tom and Leah sneak a quick kiss.

As the song drops into the background, Leah looks at her watch.

LEAH
(to Harper)
Is my watch broken? Where's Hawk?

HARPER
I told him I wanted to spend
Christmas with my family.

LEAH
I thought he was part of the flock?

HARPER
I'm over the bird metaphors. And
maybe Hawk.

Leah looks proud.

And across the table...

TOM
You guys ready to open some more
presents?

But nobody jumps at the opportunity. In fact--

LILY
Eh, I just wanna be here with you
guys. I like family time.

So warm and fuzzy!

TOM
So do I.

LEAH
How about a group shot?

Tom sets up the camera and starts a timer.

The family poses for the photo.

The timer: 3 - 2 -

SASHA
Everybody say "pot cookies"!

FLASH!

As the photo is taken, DANIEL the parrot slams into the window behind them. Skittles, mid-air behind, teeth bared.

In the photo, Leah looks dumbfounded at Sasha.

Tom laughs.

Harper, aghast, at the rainbow streak on the window.

Lily looks confused.

Sasha is laughing with her hand over her mouth.

Then in CURSIVE over the photo:

Merry Christmas!

It's the card they'll send out next year.

THE END.

ROLL CREDITS

Then intercut...

- Lily, now learning humility and the value of responsibility, quickly scoops up a fresh Skittle "present" from Harper's Zen garden.

- At the airport, Leah sees Harper off on a semester in India. Leah's proud of her daughter despite the budding dreadlocks.

- Leah delivers a heartwarming pitch for the next Christmas campaign; for once, she nails it. Her colleagues APPLAUD her presentation.

- In a chic boho apartment (clearly Sasha's), Leah and her sister share a joint - on purpose this time, lots of giggles.

POST CREDITS:

EXT. RV - GRAND CANYON - DAY

A Winnebago is parked alongside the North Rim.

INT. RV - DAY

A card game. It's the whole family, Sasha included.

The adults sip Natty Lite and everyone passes around takeout containers.

A string of colored bulbs line the interior. It's cheery but not over the top.

As they play cards...

SASHA
(to Harper)
So... how's Vassar?

HARPER
Pretty sure I just aced my
Marketing final. AND booked a yoga
retreat in Tulum for spring break.

Leah smiles. Puts a card down. Sasha throws a glance at Leah-- really?

LEAH
(shrugs)
Well she did ace her final... Sash,
how's the mentoring going? What was
it? Tarot for Tots? Kind of like a
life coach for a seven year old.

Leah smirks.

SASHA
Hey, it's better than We Aid. And
it's going really well. Realized
there's some truth in that saying
"think globally, act locally."
Especially in LA. In fact, I'm
gonna try out my new program on
Lily tonight.

TOM
Just don't turn her into a Ghost
Hunter.

LEAH
Tom, you have to stop watching that
show.

HARPER

Sasha, you should have seen him. In
the attic. With a Ouija board.

LILY

The house was built in the 1970s.
Who's haunting it? Cher?

Tom grunts and throws down a card.

LILY (CONT'D)

(to Sasha)

Try whatever woo-woo you want on
me, I'm gonna be a particle
physicist.

Then a KNOCK at the door.

Leah opens it - the canyon echos back. Nobody around.

Tom clocks her confusion and joins.

As he's about to close the door, he looks down:

ECU: on a small plate, there are exactly seven cookies
accompanied by a note.

We read along as Tom munches.

Even closer: "Missed you this year. Wasn't the same. Promise
these won't cause any trouble."

As he picks up the note, a ONE YEAR CHIP clatters to the
ground.

THE REAL END