

THE SECOND STORY SANTA

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. TWO-STORY HOUSE - NIGHT

A heavy-set man, 32, Caucasian, with dark hair, a two-day stubble, wearing a soiled Santa Claus costume, climbs up the trellis to a second-story balcony. He silently opens the sliding glass door and slips inside the dark room.

INT. TWO-STORY HOUSE

The man skulks down the stairs, crossing to the kitchen.

He grabs a pint of milk out of the refrigerator. He drinks from the carton, letting it spill from his mouth.

He snatches a handful of cookies from a plate on the counter and stuffs them into his mouth, spitting crumbs, as he moves toward the living room.

He stops in front of the Christmas tree and takes a folded black garbage bag out of his pocket. He shakes the bag open with a snap and bends down to collect the presents.

Humming a Christmas tune under his breath, he walks off with the big black bag bulging, another large present tucked under his arm, leaving behind a bare, sad-looking tree.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SHOPPING DISTRICT - NIGHT

Snow falls on last minute shoppers as Christmas music plays and decorations light the night.

High above the stores stands a tall, dark building, an isolated tower in the sky. Near the top of the building, there's an office with the lights on.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

A holiday office party, between and around the rows of cubicles. Christmas music and decorations, laughter and the popped cork of champagne.

CLIFFORD WATSON, a thirty-year-old black man who looks like he would probably know a lot about computers, sits alone in a cubicle wearing a headset. His dress shirt doesn't quite fit his narrow frame and his tie should have been re-gifted.

CLIFFORD  
 (into headset)  
 Did you say you get turned on by  
 Mary Poppins?

He listens suspiciously. His face brightens.

CLIFFORD  
 Oh, I get it. When you turn on your  
 computer, nothing happens. Yeah,  
 that's different. What kind of  
 accent is that? If you don't mind.

Clifford listens.

CLIFFORD  
 It's not an accent? You Silly-Glued  
 your lips? I'm sorry to hear that.  
 What about the computer? Did you  
 try plugging it in? Good. That's  
 good. Yes, that's right. I am a  
 genius. Or you're drinking  
 Guinness. Whatever you just said.  
 Thank you for calling. Happy  
 holidays. Good luck.

He hits the button to hang up, exhausted.

CLIFFORD  
 God, I hate Christmas.

BART BENTON, 40, white, the office manager, looks over the  
 side of the cubicle. He's drinking champagne from the bottle.

BART  
 Man, don't hate Christmas.  
 Christmas loves you.

CLIFFORD  
 Were you just...

BART  
 Checking up on you? No. No way. I  
 was just listening. Christmas loves  
 you.

Bart takes a drink and Clifford stands up.

CLIFFORD  
 How the heck does Christmas love  
 me? I'm cold. I'm stressed. And  
 Christmas trees make me sneeze.

BART  
It's not the trees. It's the  
flocking. You're allergic to flock.

CLIFFORD  
No, I'm allergic to Christmas. I  
break out in debt.

BART  
You've got to look on the bright  
side. Look at the pretty lights.

Clifford looks at the lights.

CLIFFORD  
I see a giant waste of energy.

BART  
The colors?

CLIFFORD  
Blood and bones. A really bad car  
wreck.

BART  
The songs. You've got to love the  
songs.

CLIFFORD  
White Christmas? Right.

BART  
No, look, Cliff, you're not  
thinking straight. You're lonely.  
You've got no wife, no kids. You're  
not familiated like the rest of us.

CLIFFORD  
That's why I get to work on  
Christmas Eve.

BART  
And that's what we love about you.  
That and the fact that you don't  
steal supplies.

CLIFFORD  
I'm getting a call.

BART  
Here, let me take it.

Bart rips Clifford's headset off his head.

BART  
Merry Christmas. Hold, please.

He places the headset on a blinking, five-foot plastic Santa.

BART  
Look, you're all mixed up.  
Somewhere in life you got scrooged.  
But I know just what to do. We've  
got to get you de-scroogified.

CLIFFORD  
I think first we've got to get you  
a dictionary.

Bart walks Clifford to the elevator, arm around his shoulder.

BART  
Look, take a break. Go finish up  
your shopping. Whatever. In  
sweaters I take a large. Seriously.  
And while you're out, have a real  
cup of coffee. Not this coffee-  
flavored bong water we serve here.

Clifford steps alone into the elevator and turns to Bart.

BART  
And when you're ready, I want you  
to come back for what's usually a  
thankless night of shameless ass-  
kissing that we call customer  
service. But not tonight. No.  
Tonight we're leaving you all the  
fruitcake you can eat. Why? I'll  
tell you why. 'Cause Christmas  
loves you. Now, quick, show me how  
to shake hands like a black guy.

Clifford steps forward and shakes his hand in the standard  
business fashion. He steps back into the elevator.

Bart appears to be confused. He looks down at his hand,  
pantomimes some ridiculous handshake gestures and looks up at  
Clifford, begging for help.

Clifford raises his hand to say good-bye as the elevator  
doors close in his face.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

Last minute shoppers run rampant through the busy store.

Clifford wanders through the aisles of women's pants and sweaters, undecided. He notices a small plasma television set for sale on the counter. He pauses to take in a news report.

NEWSMAN

Law enforcement officials are on the lookout for a heavy-set Caucasian man who's been breaking into homes masquerading as Santa. Police are calling him the Second-Story Santa for his unusual ability to climb to the upper...

Clifford looks up from the television to the long line of mostly mothers and children waiting for their moment with a traditional-looking Santa Claus.

TERESA WILLIAMS, a pretty, well-dressed black woman about the same age as Clifford, works the floor, tidying up.

TERESA

(flirtatiously)

Maybe you should have a talk with Santa. He knows what everybody wants.

Clifford turns and starts to speak, but he finishes his sentence one word at a time as he realizes that he knows her.

CLIFFORD

Then he must know that I just want to get it over with. Teresa?

TERESA

Yes.

CLIFFORD

High school? Clifford? Cliff?

TERESA

Oh, my goodness.

CLIFFORD

Remember the glasses? The buck teeth?

He makes glasses with his thumbs and index fingers and he sticks out his front teeth to demonstrate.

TERESA

You look so different. It's amazing.

CLIFFORD

You look exactly the same. Also,  
amazing.

TERESA

Thank you. I needed that.

CLIFFORD

You know, it's funny, but every  
Christmas I think about you.

TERESA

You do?

CLIFFORD

You probably don't remember this,  
but somehow I got up the nerve one  
time to ask you to the holiday  
dance.

TERESA

I remember. But I had a boyfriend.

CLIFFORD

I know, but I'd heard you guys were  
fighting, so I thought you'd broken  
up. Anyway, I had it all planned  
out. I was gonna leave my glasses  
at home and use sign language so  
you wouldn't see my horrible teeth.

Clifford grins, showing off his now perfect teeth.

TERESA

Well, we did break up. Two years  
ago. This time for good.

She flashes her left hand to show the missing ring.

CLIFFORD

You know, I come in here all the  
time. I've never seen you.

TERESA

I usually work at the store uptown.  
But it's the holidays.

CLIFFORD

I'm glad. I mean, I'm glad I ran  
into you.

TERESA

Me, too. You know, this last minute shopping can get pretty expensive.

CLIFFORD

At least I'm single. I can't believe parents spend a couple weeks pay on presents and let that fat guy take all the credit.

They turn toward the Santa Claus and the long line waiting.

TERESA

See the boy and girl in blue there with my mother. Those are mine.

TERENCE, six, and his big sister, ABBY, eight, stand with their grandmother, LENA, 62, about halfway down the line. Abby sees them and waves.

CLIFFORD

Cute kids.

Teresa grins.

CLIFFORD

But don't you think they're old enough to know where rubber babies come from?

TERESA

What about those presents that say From Santa that mysteriously show up on Christmas Eve?

She moves toward the perfume counter, forcing him to follow.

CLIFFORD

Are you serious? Those are from our parents. They just don't know when to quit.

TERESA

My mom still swears on a stack of bibles that they're not.

She goes behind the counter. He talks over it.

CLIFFORD

Then what am I doing here? I saw a rainbow last summer in the sprinklers. I should be digging up the park for my pot of gold.

TERESA

The ground's frozen. You can wait till spring.

CLIFFORD

What, and let the Easter Bunny find it first? How do you think he pays for all those eggs?

TERESA

(suddenly cool)

I don't know. I'm still working on Christmas Eve. Is there anything else I can help you with?

CLIFFORD

Wait a minute. Are you mad at me?

TERESA

I just see a lot of people trying to get my attention. So if we're finished...

CLIFFORD

Is there any way I could trick you into giving me your phone number?

She points to her name plate that says TERESA WILLIAMS, MANAGER.

TERESA

I changed my last name back to Williams. You can always reach me at the store.

CLIFFORD

But I get the feeling that you'd rather I didn't.

TERESA

Look. I already got rid of one guy who didn't believe in the magic of marriage. I don't need another non-believer.

She looks him in the eye to drive her point home. Then she turns her perfect hips around and walks to the far side of the counter, her back to Clifford as she helps another customer.

Clifford looks heartbroken.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

A sleigh drawn by reindeer speeds the traditional fat, bearded white Santa across the sky above the Atlantic Ocean.

Santa grins and grooves to the hip-hop Christmas music playing on earbud headphones at the end of a white cord running to the music player in his pocket.

The sleigh sweeps past the Statue of Liberty into Manhattan.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Three Middle School students make snowballs on a snow-covered roof.

DESMOND, the taller, thin black leader, leans over the side of the roof and looks down at the street six stories below. He has a snowball ready in his hand.

A long red luxury sedan creeps slowly up the quiet, icy street.

TYSON, a small, cute Puerto Rican kid, squats down with the heavy-set RANDALL, a bookish, Hispanic kid with glasses.

TYSON

This is the best Christmas Eve  
ever.

Randall nods his head enthusiastically.

DESMOND

Alright, wait. Wait. Okay, now!

Tyson and Randall jump up to toss their snowballs.

Desmond throws first.

The snowball is timed perfectly to hit the middle of the big red roof. The car brakes and spins and slides on the ice into a snowbank. Two more snowballs hit the hood and the rear window near the trunk.

Tyson and Randall dance and cheer victoriously.

But Desmond keeps an eye on the target.

The angry black DRIVER, dressed in formal attire, gets out to check the car. He glares up at the tops of the buildings.

Desmond ducks out of sight before the man can see him.

DESMOND

Run!

Tyson and Randall stop celebrating and sprint after Desmond as he races toward the rooftop door.

Desmond reaches the door, tugs on it. Locked.

DESMOND

It's locked.

RANDALL

You told me to lock it.

DESMOND

I meant lock it on this side. Come on.

Desmond runs over to the rusty exterior fire escape.

He jumps on the ledge next to the fire escape ladder. He puts a hand on the ladder and starts to take a step when he looks down and freezes. He signals to Tyson and Randall to be quiet and motions for them to peek over the side.

They see a man in a Santa outfit disappear through the third floor window, pulling behind him a large black bag.

TYSON

It's the Second-Story Santa!

DESMOND

That's the third floor.

RANDALL

What if it's the real Santa?

The other two boys give him a fishy look.

DESMOND

You're in seventh grade.

TYSON

Yeah, it ain't gangsta to believe in Santa.

(to Desmond)

Is it?

DESMOND

We need a rope.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

First the bag comes out of the window, and then Santa, seen from above, steps into view.

On the roof, Desmond, Tyson, and Randall stand next to the ladder looking down. All three boys are holding part of a rope and looking over the side of the building.

The rope they are holding runs down the side of the building, down to the third story landing of the fire escape.

Santa, the real Santa, still listening to headphones, munches on a large cookie and leans over to pick up his big black bag when a loop at the end of the long rope suddenly tightens around his left boot. His leg is jerked out from under him.

Cookie in hand, Santa comes flying legs first off the fire escape with the loop of the rope tight around his left boot.

The boys run backwards holding their end of the rope until the weight of the man at the other end makes them stop and hold on with all their might.

Santa swings upside down along the alley side of the building between the second and third floors. The music player falls out of his pocket and drops with the headphones to the ground.

DESMOND

Pull.

The boys pull the rope, giving it all they've got.

Santa slowly begins to rise.

The boys pull the rope back a few more steps before their feet slip on the icy snow and they slide back toward the side of the building.

Santa gasps as he drops down several feet.

DESMOND

Come on. Let's do it. Dig in. On the count of three. One, two, three. Pull.

The boys pull the rope back several steps.

Santa rises.

DESMOND  
Keep going. Pull.

The boys go back even further.

DESMOND  
We've got it. Pull. Keep pulling.

The boys strain and dig in their heels. But suddenly all tension is lost and the boys fall to the ground and the looped end of the rope holding only a big black boot comes flying up over the side of the building.

In unison the boys see the boot and scream.

Santa falls down the side of the building wearing just one boot.

He lands on his back in an open trash bin with a two-part metal lid. Dust and ashes erupt from the bin. The lid that was leaning open against the building closes itself from the force of the impact.

Three anxious faces peek over the side.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A nearly empty bus pulls over to the curb on a quiet, snow-covered street.

Clifford steps down off the bus into a mound of snow left by the snow plow and sinks to his knees. He drags himself out of the snow and walks down the deserted sidewalk.

Across the street, he notices the red luxury sedan from before backing out of the snowbank and driving away. He comes to his apartment building and enters with his key.

INT. CLIFFORD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Clifford enters his dreary, one-bedroom apartment where he's greeted by MARLEY, a small, short-haired mutt, so ugly he's cute.

CLIFFORD  
Hey, Marley, you ready for a walk?  
Or did you decide to leave me a  
present?

He crosses over to a small, pathetic-looking, three-foot-tall plastic Christmas tree on top of a card table. He looks under the table.

CLIFFORD

Nothing under the tree. How about the kitchen?

Searching the floor, he crosses to a small kitchen where he turns on the light.

CLIFFORD

My man, Marley. I see a squeaky toy in your future.

He moves back over to the Christmas tree taking a small wrapped present out of his coat pocket. He squeezes the present and it squeaks.

CLIFFORD

And then I see me slowly going insane from the sound of it constantly squeaking. Maybe that's not such a good idea.

He puts the present in his pocket and looks back around. Marley has his leash in his mouth.

CLIFFORD

Alright, buddy. But it's cold outside. Hope that's your winter coat.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Desmond, Tyson, and Randall squat around the bag of toys.

DESMOND

We can't call the cops. They'll trace the call and wake up our parents.

RANDALL

I'm supposed to be in bed.

TYSON

I'm supposed to be grounded and in bed.

RANDALL

What are you grounded for?

TYSON  
For sticking it to the man.

RANDALL  
That's gangsta.

DESMOND  
He got a D on a math test.

RANDALL  
Wow. Maybe you could do some extra credit.

DESMOND  
Look, we've got to do something now.

RANDALL  
We could quiz him.

DESMOND  
I'm talking about the presents.  
We've got to get them back where they belong.

TYSON  
What if someone catches us and calls our parents?

RANDALL  
What if the Second-Story Santa wakes up and cuts off our heads?

DESMOND  
We've got to get back inside and find the manager.

RANDALL  
Man, that dude's really scary.

TYSON  
I heard he went crazy in some stupid war.

Desmond stands up and tosses the bag over his shoulder.

DESMOND  
Crazy or not, dude's got the keys.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ALLEY - NIGHT

Clifford steps out of the back of the building with Marley on his leash. They stop and Clifford waits for Marley to do his business in the snow.

CLIFFORD  
I'll just give you a little  
privacy...

Clifford looks around and notices that the half-open garbage bin is rocking slightly. A Santa Claus coat flies out of the bin and lands in the snow.

He and Marley cross over to the coat. Clifford drops the leash and knocks some snow off the coat with this hand. Then he turns to the garbage bin.

CLIFFORD  
Excuse me. Is there somebody in  
there? In the garbage?

First his hands grip the side of the bin, then a BUM, with long, thick, matted hair, pulls himself up until his eyes appear.

BUM  
Maybe.

CLIFFORD  
Is this your Santa Claus outfit?

BUM  
Maybe. How much you give me for it?

CLIFFORD  
Do you have the pants?

BUM  
Give me a second.

He goes back down into the garbage bin. The bin shakes a little and then the Bum comes back up with the pants. He tosses them out on the ground.

BUM  
How much?

CLIFFORD  
I'm not sure it will fit.

BUM  
Sure it'll fit. It matches your eyes.

CLIFFORD  
My eyes are red?

BUM  
No, I meant the white part.

CLIFFORD  
I'll give you five bucks.

BUM  
Five for the coat and five for the pants. Ten bucks.

CLIFFORD  
I was thinking I'd surprise this girl at her store tomorrow. But I'm not even sure she's working.

BUM  
I'm sure she'll love it. Ten bucks.

Clifford pulls out his wallet.

CLIFFORD  
I don't suppose you have change for a twenty.

BUM  
Ten for the coat, ten for the pants. She'll love it. Twenty bucks. I'll throw in the hat.

The Bum takes the hat out of his own coat pocket and throws it on the ground.

CLIFFORD  
Alright. Merry Christmas.

He hands the twenty to the bum. The bum holds the bill up to the street light, checking its authenticity.

BUM  
Andrew Jackson. The Jackson Five.  
Sorry, Miss Jackson. Miss Jackson,  
if you're nasty. Jackson Hole,  
Jackson Browne. Kendall Jackson...

While the bum continues to name Jacksons, Clifford takes the Santa outfit and goes with Marley back inside.

BUM  
 Jackson Pollack, Jesse Jackson,  
 Jackson Jill went up the hill...

SANTA (O.S.)  
 Where am I?

BUM  
 You're alive? Wow. I'm slipping. I  
 should have checked that.

He climbs out of the garbage bin.

BUM  
 If you need another boot, there's  
 one about three bins back. You want  
 this open or closed?

SANTA (O.S.)  
 Where am I?

BUM  
 Yeah, I think open. Fresh air.

He sticks Santa's headphones in his ears and walks off,  
 listening to Santa's hip hop Christmas music, holding up his  
 twenty dollar bill to check it again in the light.

INT. CLIFFORD'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Clifford stands in the Santa pants in front of a mirror. The  
 suspenders keep the pants from falling off his narrow frame,  
 but he puts a belt around the waist for added support.

CLIFFORD  
 Still butt-ugly, but at least they  
 won't fall down.

Marley turns his head to the side for a better look.

CLIFFORD  
 Maybe they'll look better with the  
 coat on.

He throws on the Santa coat. Fastens the belt. He looks in  
 the mirror, frowns.

CLIFFORD  
 There's no way I'm gonna wear this  
 on the bus.

EXT. GARBAGE BIN - NIGHT

A hand reaches up out of the open side of the garbage bin and puts an empty shoebox on top of the half that is closed.

Santa crawls out of the garbage bin wearing long thermal underwear, socks, and one black boot. He looks shaken, confused. He keeps the bootless foot up off the snow.

He glances around, searching the snow-covered ground. Giving up, he takes the empty shoebox off the garbage lid and puts it on the ground. He puts his bootless sock in the box.

He looks both ways and drags the shoebox over to the back door of the building. He pounds on the door and waits. After a moment, he steps back to look up at the fire escape.

The ladder to the ground has been pulled all the way up. Too high to reach. There's no one on the fire escape. Lights are out in every window except for the hallways.

INT. MANAGER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The MANAGER, 65, a slender, bald, Jewish man, sits in a recliner sound asleep, snoring, in front of the television set.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

Desmond, Randall, and Tyson stand outside a door marked MANAGER. They stand with their ear to the door.

DESMOND

Tyson, you get ready to knock.  
Randall, you come with me.

Desmond walks off down the hallway and Randall tags along.

DESMOND

Get ready to put on your mask.

They both reach into their coat pockets and pull out scary rubber Halloween masks that cover their entire head. Desmond points to the fire alarm on the wall.

DESMOND

We'll stand next to this thing.  
He's always worried some kid's  
gonna pull it.

RANDALL

That's because you pulled it.

DESMOND

(shrugging)

I pulled it one time. Once.

Tyson knocks on the door, then steps quickly around the corner to hide next to the elevator.

The Manager comes out and looks both ways. He sees Desmond and Randall in masks standing next to the fire alarm. Desmond touches it, as if he's about to pull it.

MANAGER

You two get away from that alarm.  
Don't think those masks fool me.  
Five to six feet. 100 to 200  
pounds. Mid-to-late 20's. I could  
pick you out of any line-up.

He shuffles stiffly toward them.

Desmond and Randall back away slowly, giving him a chance to catch up.

Tyson rushes around the corner into the Manager's apartment.

Inside the apartment, Tyson runs to the peg board on the wall where the Manager keeps his keys. But all he finds is a set of car keys. He suddenly realizes.

TYSON

Oh, no.

He rushes out of the apartment.

He looks down the hallway just as the Manager is turning the corner. Desmond and Randall are already out of sight.

TYSON

(shouting)

Guys, he's got the keys on his  
belt!

Desmond and Randall stop. They look back at the Manager and see the huge set of keys dangling from the front of his belt.

The Manager stops and feels for the keys with his hand.

The Manager comes running back around the corner.

The two boys in masks come running after him, but the Manager makes it back to his apartment before the boys can catch up. The door slams in their monster faces. They hear the sound of several locks.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

Santa drags his shoebox up to the front of the apartment building. He finds the Manager's buzzer and rings.

MANAGER (O.S.)

Yeah, what is it?

SANTA

Hi. You don't know me, but this is Mr. Claus. I left a bag in your building. If you would be so kind as to...

INTERCUT

MANAGER

What kind of an idiot do you think I am? I just called the cops on your monster pals. So I don't care if your name's Claws, or Jaws, or even Fangs. You don't scare me one iota.

Santa looks perplexed.

Just then a police car speeds up and slides wildly out of control turning all the way around before it stops in front of the building.

Two policemen jump out and the FIRST COP approaches Santa, still dressed in his long thermal underwear, standing at the front door.

The SECOND COP hangs back by the car with his hand on his gun.

FIRST COP

We just got a call from someone saying they just locked out a couple of guys who were wearing some sort of mask, but maybe what they meant was a disguise.

The First Cop yanks Santa's beard. Santa cries out in pain.

FIRST COP

Okay. Maybe he just thought it was a disguise. What you doing outside in your long johns this time of night?

SANTA

Well, officer, I don't live here. I'm just trying to get in to get my bag of presents.

The First Cop turns to the Second Cop.

FIRST COP

Says he wants to get in to get some presents.

SECOND COP

Put that in writing, we got a confession.

The First Cop looks down at the shoebox on Santa's foot.

FIRST COP

What happened to your boot?

SANTA

Well, to make a long story short, I'm the real Santa Claus and I suppose you could say I was mugged. If I could just get in, I've got a spare suit...

FIRST COP

Wait a minute. Let me get this straight. You're saying you're the real Santa?

SANTA

That's right.

FIRST COP

(to Second Cop)

Says he's the real St. Nick.

SECOND COP

Holy Moly, not another one.

FIRST COP

You want to know how many real Santas we've picked up tonight? Mostly for drunk and disorderly.

SECOND COP

At least they had suits on. All  
he's got's a beer belly and a  
beard.

SANTA

Yes, officers, I admit it looks  
suspicious. If you'd kindly escort  
me to my sleigh, I'd gladly show  
you the reindeer and be on my way.

FIRST COP

Wants to show us his reindeer.

SECOND COP

I say let him show it to the judge.

FIRST COP

I'm gonna need you to face the wall  
with your hands behind your back.

SANTA

But, officer, I've got millions of  
presents to deliver and I'm running  
behind...

FIRST COP

Against the wall, hands behind your  
back now!

He shoves Santa against the wall and quickly cuffs him.

SANTA

Please. Think of the children.

The First Cop turns him around and drags him over to the  
police car where the Second Cop has the back door open.

FIRST COP

I am thinking of the children.  
That's why I'm keeping you guys in  
your underwear off the streets.

The Second Cop picks up the shoebox off the ground and throws  
it in the back seat before he closes the door.

INT. MANAGER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Manager stands at the living room window looking out.

## MANAGER

Great. They take one bad guy and leave the rest of the gang behind. Happy Hanukkah. I should have moved to Miami when I had the chance. Down there they know how to crack some heads. They got Crockett and Tubbs. What do we got? We got Letterman.

He grabs up the remote and takes his anger out on the button turning on the television set. The LATE SHOW with DAVID LETTERMAN comes on the TV. He's doing a Christmas Top Ten.

In the next room, separated by an archway, underneath the dining room table, Tyson lifts the tablecloth to look out at the Manager, sitting between him and the door. His stomach growls. He looks scared.

## INT. CLIFFORD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Clifford stands with a black running shoe on one foot and a loose black rubber boot on the other.

## CLIFFORD

Okay, which one looks the least ridiculous? Maybe I'll have time tomorrow to buy some big black boots. No, I know. I'll tell her I just came by her store to buy some footwear. That way I won't look so desperate. In my oversized Santa suit. Wait a minute. Tomorrow's Christmas. What if they're closed?

He hears a noise at the door and looks around. Marley growls.

The doorknob jerks back and forth. Someone is trying the door to see if it's locked.

## CLIFFORD

What the heck?

Clifford goes over to the door, checks the peek hole, and quietly opens the door to look out.

He watches Desmond wearing his Halloween mask with the bag of toys slung over his back, walking down the hallway, trying every door he passes. Randall, also in his mask, drags along behind him.

Clifford quickly opens the door and steps out into the hallway.

CLIFFORD  
Hey, you two...

The boys whip their heads around, momentarily frozen.

DESMOND  
It's that Santa! Run!

Desmond speeds off down the hallway with the bag of toys. Randall follows him around the corner.

Clifford chases them, but his mismatched footwear seems to slow him down. Marley starts late but quickly gets ahead of him.

Desmond throws open a door with a sign that says ROOF. He shoots off up a narrow staircase that leads to the door that lets out onto the roof. He opens the door and stops to look around.

DESMOND  
Hurry up. Let's go.

Randall starts climbing the stairs and gets halfway up when Marley catches up with him.

Marley bites down on the cuff at the bottom of Randall's pants and doesn't let go.

Randall screams and, after a few more steps, turns around and kicks his leg in the air. Marley flies off the leg of his pants, tumbles through the air, and lands in Clifford's arms at the bottom of the stairs.

Randall screams again when he sees Clifford. He turns and races to the top of the stairs, flies out the door with Desmond, and pushes it shut.

Desmond bolts the door from the outside.

DESMOND  
The fire escape.

Desmond throws the bag over his shoulder and heads off down the fire escape followed by Randall.

Randall hears sleigh bells and stops at the top of the fire escape to look back. But all he sees is a snow-covered roof. He shrugs and follows Desmond down the ladder.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Clifford, dressed as Santa, turns the knob and pushes the door with all his might, but he can't get the door to budge.

Marley growls at something on the other side of the door.

Clifford takes a few steps back down the stairs.

CLIFFORD

I think those guys stole somebody's presents. And the only thing that stands between me and the roof is a cheap little lock.

Clifford turns and sprints toward the locked door. He starts to fly at it with his shoulder when suddenly he turns into a blur of red and white energy that streams through the edge of the door.

Marley looks at the door and barks.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The red and white energy stream comes out the other side of the door where it materializes back into Clifford in his Santa suit on the rooftop. He has built up so much momentum that he slides on the ice and falls facedown in the snow.

Clifford picks up his head to shake off the snow. Then he looks up at the amazing sight before his eyes.

Santa's sleigh and reindeer stand stretched out before him along the side of the roof. The reindeer all have their heads turned his way.

Clifford drags himself to his feet, staring at the magical sight. Then he hears Marley barking on the other side of the door. With a quizzical expression, he looks from the door to the ground and back to the door.

He unbolts the door and opens it. Marley steps out onto the roof and silently stares in the direction of the sleigh.

CLIFFORD

You see it too? I thought for a second I'd just hit my head.

He steps slowly around the front of the reindeer team.

CLIFFORD

I hope they don't bite.

DASHER, one of the two lead reindeer, clears his throat behind Clifford's back.

Clifford's head whips around to the source of the sound.

CLIFFORD

Was that you?

Dasher doesn't answer.

CLIFFORD

Now I'm talking to a reindeer.

He continues on around the team of reindeer.

DASHER

You talk to a dog. Why not a reindeer?

Clifford stops and goes back to the front.

CLIFFORD

Alright. I heard that. Which one of you guys can talk?

DASHER

We all talk.

DANCER

Some more than others.

CUPID

She means me. Hi, I'm Cupid. It's not that I talk so much. I mean, I'm trying to stop. I think it's hormones. Or maybe it's the coffee. I love coffee. I love beans. Don't you? Have you seen Santa? I'm starting to worry. It's starting to talk. Talk. Worry. Worry. Talk.

DASHER

Cupid...

CUPID

All right. Okay. I'll zip it.

Cupid uses his antlers like a hand to pantomime zipping his lips. He grins, then raises only the side of his mouth for one last thing.

CUPID  
Merry Christmas.

Clifford nods his head.

DASHER  
And on the quiet side, there's  
Prancer. She got hit by lightning,  
so we all learned to sign.

Prancer uses her antlers to sign HELLO. NICE TO MEET YOU.

Clifford tries to sign back the same thing.

DASHER  
You just said your underwear's on  
backwards.

Clifford signs SORRY.

CLIFFORD  
I'm surprised you guys can move  
your antlers like that.

DANCER  
You're surprised at antlers? Hello.  
We're reindeer. We can talk.

DASHER  
You're wearing the Santa suit.  
That's why you can see us. Anyone  
wearing one of those belts can see  
through the disappearing device.

CLIFFORD  
Then how come Marley can see you?

DASHER  
He can't. He can hear us. And he  
probably smells Vixen's perfume.

VIXEN  
It's Cranberry Deer.

CLIFFORD  
I like it. Very nice.

Vixen, very girlie, looks pleased with his answer.

DANCER  
You're quite the ladies man, aren't  
you?

CLIFFORD

It's nice. I mean, the rest of you might want to try it. I know you've been flying all night, but really.

DASHER

Speaking of hygiene, where the heck is the big man and why are you wearing his suit?

CLIFFORD

I don't know about Santa. I bought the suit from a guy in the alley. All I wanted to do is impress this girl I've been in love with since high school.

DANCER

I guess some people are easily impressed.

DASHER

You really need the boots to complete the look.

CLIFFORD

I have black galoshes and black running shoes.

DANCER

Couldn't decide?

CLIFFORD

I was interrupted.

DASHER

Look, there's a boot over there. Maybe you should throw it in the sleigh in case we come across the other one.

Clifford crosses over to where the boys left Santa's boot. He carries it back to the sleigh and tosses it over the side.

CLIFFORD

Alright, well, it was nice meeting you guys.

DASHER

Hey, hey, ho, there. Where you going?

CLIFFORD

Home. Do you know what time it is?  
I'm going to bed.

DASHER

Exactly. It's after midnight and  
we've barely touched the east  
coast. We've got the rest of the  
country to do before morning.

CLIFFORD

If it'd help I could go change  
clothes and give you back the suit.

DASHER

I thought you wanted to impress the  
girl.

CLIFFORD

Yeah, but...

DASHER

Well, how impressed is she going to  
be when she finds out you're Santa?

CLIFFORD

Right. I thought of that. But a  
Santa suit doesn't make me Santa.

DASHER

I don't mean to argue, but in this  
case it does. Although the boots  
would definitely help.

CLIFFORD

What about the bag of toys?

DASHER

No problem. There's another Santa  
bag in the sleigh.

CLIFFORD

But I'm allergic to flocking.  
Flock. Whatever.

DASHER

You'll get a runny nose. So what?

CLIFFORD

Okay. Fine. But it gets worse. I'm  
afraid of heights.

The reindeer laugh.

DASHER

Wait. I think he's serious.

CLIFFORD

It's called acrophobia. I panic when I get too far off the ground.

DASHER

But you're six floors up and you seem just fine.

CLIFFORD

That's because I can't see the ground. If I could, there'd be vomit.

The reindeer all make grossed out noises.

CLIFFORD

(walking away)

Right. Well, I'll get you your Santa suit. Maybe you can find someone else.

DASHER

Wait a minute. Do you happen to know this dream girl's address?

CLIFFORD

The one from high school? No. I know her name. Teresa Williams.

DASHER

Great. Then you're in luck. There's a book in the sleigh. It gives all the local addresses.

Clifford picks up Marley. He barks.

CLIFFORD

What is it?

DASHER

Now he can see us. Anyone you touch with that belt on can see us. Put him in the sleigh. He can watch us from there.

Dasher looks at Dancer and winks, he has a trick up his hoof.

Clifford takes Marley over to the sleigh with him. He climbs in and sets Marley on top of the dashboard.

Clifford picks up the magical address book. The pages light up as he looks for Teresa.

CLIFFORD

It's here. She lives on Highland.

Suddenly the sleigh takes off, throwing Clifford back into the seat and Marley into his arms.

CLIFFORD

Hey, wait a minute. I was just...  
I can't do this. I'm gonna hurl!

The sleigh flies off across the sky with the reluctant Clifford and his dog barking inside.

INT. CITY JAIL - NIGHT

The Night Sergeant locks the cell door.

NIGHT SERGEANT

Maybe tomorrow there'll be room in  
the drunk tank. Meanwhile, make  
yourself acquainted with some of  
the regulars.

The real Santa Claus, wearing one boot and an old borrowed running shoe on the opposite foot, stands behind bars in an open wool moth-eaten overcoat with a worried expression.

SANTA

But I'm telling you, I am the real  
Santa. You can ask me anything.  
Look, even my underwear says Made  
at the North Pole.

Santa Claus twists around to check the tag in the pants of his thermals. A wider view of the jail reveals a cell full of fake white Santas.

NIGHT SERGEANT

Just leave your North Pole in your  
pants.

He opens the main door to go out.

SANTA

Wait. I can name all the elves!

The main door is heard slamming shut.

The FIRST FAKE, dressed as Santa, stumbles up behind him.

FIRST FAKE

I know how you can get out.

SANTA

Oh, thank you. How is that?

FIRST FAKE

Tell them you don't believe in Santa Claus.

SANTA

But I do believe in Santa Claus.

FIRST FAKE

Who doesn't? I'm just saying that if you admit you're not Santa, it means you're not crazy. They might let you out.

SANTA

But it's naughty to lie. I can't do that.

FIRST FAKE

Then that means you're stuck.

SANTA

Why don't you guys tell them you're not Santa?

FIRST FAKE

Because we are.

SECOND FAKE

Yep, I'm Santa.

THIRD FAKE

Me, too.

FOURTH FAKE

Ditto.

FIRST FAKE

The truth is, we don't want to leave. In the morning, we'll wake up and there'll be presents under that tree.

He points to yet another fake Santa drawing a Christmas Tree on the wall with a felt pen.

SANTA

I need to get out to deliver the presents.

FIRST FAKE

Then you're gonna have to tell them you're not Santa.

SANTA

But I can't.

FIRST FAKE

Then there's not a chance they'll let you out before morning.

SANTA

But, don't you see, if I don't get out, then no one gets any presents, including you guys.

THIRD FAKE

You keep talking like that you may never get out.

SANTA

But I really am Santa. I got mugged when I slowed down to eat a cookie.

SECOND FAKE

I heard that. It's the saturated fat that'll kill you.

SANTA

Look, I can prove it to you.

He turns to the Third Fake.

SANTA

You. When you were ten-years-old you wanted a Baby-Wets-A-Lot for Christmas.

The heads of the other fake Santas whip around.

THIRD FAKE

It was cute!

SANTA

(to Second Fake)

And you. When you were nine you wanted a train set that you didn't get because you stole a sign off your neighbor's lawn.

## SECOND FAKE

It said Slow - Children Playing. I thought it was making fun of me.

## SANTA

(to First Fake)

And you...

## FIRST FAKE

Wait. Alright. I believe you. These Santas are still too young to hear about my childhood. We need to take a meeting. Boys? Huddle.

The fake Santas quickly huddle in the corner around the only bunk bed in the cell.

Santa Claus looks puzzled.

The fake Santas break from their huddle like a football team.

## FIRST FAKE

We've been saving this for an emergency and the fellas and I decided that the time has come.

He turns to the fake Santa on the bottom bunk lying with his back to them facing the wall.

## FIRST FAKE

See that guy? He ain't sleeping. He's digging. We've been digging into that wall since Thanksgiving. Just in case.

The digging fake Santa moves aside to present, with gestures like a game show hostess, the deep indentation in the wall behind the bed.

## SANTA

What do you do with the plaster?

## THIRD FAKE

How do you think we get so fat in here?

## SECOND FAKE

It ain't the food.

He opens his coat to reveal a cloth bag hanging from his neck down to his stomach stuffed with plaster.

## FIRST FAKE

This wall opens to the alley. It's all yours. All you've got to do is punch it through and go.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The sleigh streaks across the sky and lands on a rooftop.

Clifford is visibly shaken from the ride. But he's even more frightened when he looks out over the side of the sleigh.

The sleigh is balanced on the steeped roof of a two-story mansion with the reindeer standing four on either side of the point.

## CLIFFORD

You guys ought to be ashamed of yourselves. Santa is definitely going to hear about this. I don't think he'd like you kidnapping and scaring the bee-geezus out of someone on Christmas Eve. What's his phone number? I'll call him.

He waits, but no one answers.

## CLIFFORD

Okay. Pager? E-mail?

## DASHER

We're sorry, but you've got the suit and that means you've been drafted. It's your duty to deliver.

## CLIFFORD

Oh, no. You're not getting me up in the air again. As soon as I figure out how to get down from here...

## VIXEN

It's perfectly safe.

## CLIFFORD

Oh, yeah? If it's so safe, what happened to Santa?

## CUPID

Yeah, I miss him. Where'd he go?

Cupid suddenly realizes that he spoke. He quickly slaps his antlers over his mouth.

DASHER

We're not sure what happened, but our orders are to stay with the suit. It's a little complicated.

VIXEN

Plus we kind of forgot all the details. It's been so long since something like this came up.

CLIFFORD

Alright, what about this? What if I find someone else to wear the suit? Someone who's not as terrified of heights?

The reindeer quietly discuss it, signing with their antlers.

DASHER

Okay. We'll agree to that as long as you agree to deliver presents until you find somebody else.

Clifford slowly stands up to look over the side at the roof.

CLIFFORD

Look, I'd like to help, but for one thing, I'm pretty sure I'm dreaming, and for another, there's no way I'm getting out of this sleigh. Not at this height.

DASHER

No problem.

The sleigh takes off speeding backwards toward the chimney.

Clifford, standing up, tries to balance himself.

CLIFFORD

Stop! We're gonna crash!

The sleigh stops abruptly an inch from the chimney. Clifford and the toy bag get thrown by the force over the back of the sleigh. They land on top of the chimney.

Clifford transforms like before into a red and white stream of light that disappears down the chimney.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Clifford's stream of light materializes in front of the fireplace and immediately falls down. He crashes into a chair and a lamp table. But he's able to catch the lamp before it falls. A sigh of relief.

Suddenly he sneezes loudly enough to be heard all over the house. He turns his head to see a Christmas tree covered in flocking. He can't believe his bad luck.

CLIFFORD

Flock.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Upstairs in the master bedroom, MARTHA, 38, in flannel pajamas and curlers, sits up in bed to listen. Her big lug of a balding husband, MELVIN, 39, continues to saw logs beside her. She elbows his ribs to rouse him.

MARTHA

Melvin, wake up.

Melvin grumbles, still asleep. Martha considers her options. She reaches for his ear, changes her mind. She grabs a clump of chest hair and yanks it out.

MELVIN

Ouch.

MARTHA

Quiet. There's someone downstairs.

MELVIN

Isn't it your turn to check?

MARTHA

We don't take turns. Now get your butt down there.

MELVIN

Maybe it's one of the kids.

Martha grabs the bedside remote control device and turns on the plasma TV.

On the screen, two small children sleep peacefully in their beds.

MARTHA  
See, it's not the kids.

MELVIN  
I don't know how they could get  
past the alarm. See if you can pick  
up something downstairs.

Martha changes the channel.

Nothing in the kitchen, nothing in the garage. Nothing in the  
family room. But a wide view of the living room shows  
Clifford bending over next to the Christmas tree.

MARTHA  
Look, it's the Second-Story Santa!

Melvin sits up and grabs the telephone.

MELVIN  
I'm calling the cops.

MARTHA  
But he'll make off with my jewelry.

MELVIN  
How did you know I got you jewelry?

MARTHA  
(grinning)  
I didn't. Now get the gun!

Melvin gets up and goes to the closet. He takes down a  
shotgun.

MELVIN  
But I don't even know how to use  
it.

MARTHA  
You've seen Westerns. Just aim and  
fire.

MELVIN  
But I don't want to shoot anyone.

MARTHA  
What's more important? His life or  
my jewelry?

MELVIN  
It's just earrings and a necklace.

MARTHA  
(girlie)  
It sounds pretty.  
(tone changing)  
Get your butt down there! Now!

Melvin reluctantly tiptoes out of the bedroom with the shotgun.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Clifford sticks his hand in the bag and pulls out a present. He puts it under the tree. He puts his hand back in the bag, but when he pulls it out again, his hand is empty.

He looks perplexed. The bag still appears to be full, but when he pushes his arm in up to his shoulder, the bag feels completely empty.

He puts his head in the bag and pulls it back out. He stops to think for a moment, then suddenly he realizes. He's done.

CLIFFORD  
One down, twenty million to go.

He throws his bag over his shoulder when, behind him, he hears a shotgun being cocked.

MELVIN  
Hold it.

Clifford looks around.

CLIFFORD  
Oh, hi, how you doing? Hey, you're kind of heavy, how do you feel about heights?

MELVIN  
Put down the bag.

CLIFFORD  
The bag's empty. I know it looks full, but there's really nothing in it.

MARTHA  
He's lying. Shoot him!

CLIFFORD  
No. No. No. Wait. Don't shoot. I'm Santa.

MARTHA

See, he admits it. Shoot him.

CLIFFORD

Wait. On second thought, I'm not Santa? You are. Your reindeer are up on the roof. I'll just give you the suit.

Clifford starts to unfasten the belt.

MARTHA

He's a flasher and a thief. Shoot him.

Clifford stops and looks at Melvin. Then he points at the hallway behind them.

CLIFFORD

Hey, look, a baby wolf.

Martha and Melvin look around.

Clifford grabs the bag and runs.

MARTHA

He's getting away with my jewelry!  
Fire!

Melvin shoots in the general direction.

The blast hits the wall as Clifford is rounding the corner.

Melvin and Martha chase Clifford in a circle around the house where he ducks and runs to avoid repeated shotgun blasts.

Clifford finally gets to the family room where he makes a dash for the fireplace.

Melvin and Martha are hot on his heels.

Clifford does a shoulder roll into the fireplace and disappears just as Melvin blasts the logs with a load of buckshot.

MARTHA

The roof!

She pushes Melvin toward the door.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Clifford's red and white stream materializes at the top of the chimney and Clifford tumbles through the air with the bag and lands in the sleigh, sitting down. He looks disoriented.

Martha points up at the roof.

MARTHA

Look at the snow. It moved. Shoot it.

MELVIN

You want me to shoot snow. We've got neighbors.

MARTHA

I want my jewelry. Shoot.

The shotgun blast hits the roof near the sleigh.

DASHER

That's a first.

CLIFFORD

Come on! Let's get out of here!

DANCER

A couple loads of buckshot and suddenly height's not an issue.

DASHER

Let's show them it's not nice to shoot at Santa.

DANCER

I was trying to hold it till we got to Lake Erie, but anything for the man in red.

DASHER

A pause for the Claus.

The reindeer lift off.

EXT. FRONT YARD

Martha points and Melvin continues to shoot the tiles off his roof. Martha gets distracted by something she hears.

MARTHA

Wait a minute. What's that? I hear sleigh bells.

MELVIN

Sounds like they're headed this way.

MARTHA

Like they're right on top of us.

She and Melvin look up. A shower of urine pours down on them making them cover their heads and sink to the ground. They lie gasping and squirming on the snow-covered ground in a circle of steaming yellow snow.

Sleigh bells ring as the reindeer fly off with Clifford roller coaster screaming, hanging on for dear life.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The only two-story row house on the block decorated, however modestly, for Christmas.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS

Teresa, wrapped in a silk robe, walks through the dark house into the children's upstairs bedroom. The children sleep on their own twin beds. Abby looks cozy snuggled up with her stuffed animals. But Terence needs his covers pulled up.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS

An older tube-type television set plays in the living room.

NEWSMAN

This just in on the thief known as The Second-Story Santa. The notorious Santa impersonator was reportedly involved in a shoot-out when surprised just minutes ago by a man and his wife in Brooklyn...

Teresa pushes a button to turn off the television set. She crosses to a bookshelf where she takes down her high school yearbook. She walks it over to a chair in front of the fireplace.

She flips through the pages until she comes to Clifford's picture. She laughs quietly at his nerdy glasses and his big, toothy grin.

A toilet flushes in the downstairs bathroom. Teresa quickly closes the yearbook and hides it next to the chair.

Her mother, Lena, in large curlers and bed clothes, appears in the living room, stumbling around without her glasses. She takes earplugs out of each ear and puts them in her pocket.

LENA

What are you still doing up this time of night?

TERESA

I was just thinking.

LENA

That a woman your age shouldn't be alone on Christmas Eve. Was it something like that?

TERESA

Maybe next year.

LENA

Not if you keep chasing them off, like you did that nice young man I saw you with tonight.

TERESA

That guy at the store? He was just looking.

LENA

I saw the way he was looking at you. He was ready to buy, but you weren't selling.

TERESA

I just don't know who to trust, and with two little kids I'm not about to take any chances.

LENA

He looked pretty harmless to me. Kind of lonely and cute.

TERESA

I know. But he gave up too easily, so maybe he's not worth all the bother.

Lena bends over to kiss the top of her head and moves on to leave her daughter alone with her fire.

EXT. SLEIGH - NIGHT

The reindeer pull the sleigh across a star-filled, moonlit winter night.

Clifford grips the bench in terror. He glances down at the magic book beside him. He summons the courage to let go quickly to open the book. The book lights up.

He lets go again long enough to turn the page to Teresa's name.

He catches his balance one more time, then he reaches out and touches the name in the book. The name lights up brighter than the others and he hears a DING.

He sees Teresa's name and address displayed on the dashboard.

The reindeer immediately reverse course by looping up and back around so that the sleigh is nearly upside down before it straightens out in the opposite direction. Clifford lets out a long and terrified howl.

EXT. POLICE STATION - ALLEY - NIGHT

The solid wall on the left side of the alley appears to be intact until a pair of feet, one boot, one shoe, breaks through from the second floor.

The feet continue to punch out plaster and brick until the hole is big enough for Santa Claus.

Santa Claus turns over onto his stomach and tries to crawl out but he gets stuck at the belly. Now only his lower half, still covered in thermal underwear, is hanging out.

INT. JAIL CELL

The bunk bed is pulled away from the wall. The fake Santas huddle next to the hole where Santa Claus, in thermal underwear, is stuck at the waist. Santa Claus looks worried.

The fake Santas break from their huddle and line up like a football team facing off against Santa in the hole. The First Fake acts as quarterback.

FIRST FAKE

Alright, it's fourth down and one fat Santa to go. On hike.

Santa covers his head protectively with his arms.

FIRST FAKE

Twelve. Twenty-five. Hike.

The fake Santas rush toward the hole with one stiff arm outstretched.

EXT. POLICE STATION - ALLEY

Santa pops out of the hole in the wall and drops on his back to a pile of boxes. He doesn't move.

His overcoat flies out of the hole and floats down.

A bunch of fake Santas look down from the hole and wave.

Santa Claus forces a painful smile and waves back.

INT. HOUSE - STAIRS

On the landing halfway down the stairs, HEATHER, an adorable blonde six-year-old girl in pajamas, sleeps with a pillow and a blanket.

The Second-Story Santa tiptoes past her and nearly gets to the bottom.

HEATHER

Santa?

The Second-Story Santa stops and turns around.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

(whispering)

Merry Christmas, little girl.

HEATHER

I've been waiting for you. But I think I fell asleep.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

But little boys and girls are supposed to be asleep right now. You need to get back into bed. Santa's orders.

Heather pulls out a camera and takes a quick picture.

HEATHER

I've been waiting to take your picture. My friend, Tommy, says you don't exist. I wanted to show him.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

(menacing)

Yeah, well, that could be a problem.

He climbs back up the stairs toward her.

EXT. WHITE PANEL TRUCK - NIGHT

Black boots of the Second-Story Santa cross the snow-covered residential street. A black gloved hand reaches down to place Heather's camera in front of the left front tire.

The sound of footsteps, the truck door opens and closes. The engine starts. The trunk pulls away. The tire crushes the camera to pieces.

INT. DESMOND'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The big bag of presents stands on the floor next to the bed where Desmond and Randall sit, leaning on big pillows, playing video games with the volume turned down.

Randall looks like he's already asleep with the controller in his hands.

Desmond's eyes close and he keeps playing, punching the buttons in his sleep, until his fingers slow down and stop.

INT. MANAGER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Manager is falling asleep changing channels with the remote control. His eyes are blinking until they close and his hand drops to his knee. He clicks the remote a few more times and then he stops.

Beneath the dining room table, Tyson pushes back the lace tablecloth and stares at the Manager in the opposite room. His stomach growls. He jumps with a panicked expression and quickly hides behind the tablecloth.

After a moment, he peeks through the tablecloth again. Slowly he crawls on his hands and knees out from beneath the dining room table. But he accidentally kicks a chair in the process. He freezes. After a moment, he lifts his head.

The Manager seems to be asleep. He doesn't move.

Tyson continues to crawl from the dining room into the living room. When he gets to the television set, he pushes the volume control to turn it all the way down. He listens, but the Manager seems to be breathing steadily.

He crawls over to the chair on the Manager's left side. He glances at the door.

The door has four deadbolt locks and a chain.

He looks at the giant ring of keys on the Manager's belt. Carefully he reaches for the keys to disconnect them when suddenly the Manager reaches out and grabs his wrist.

MANAGER

Gottcha!

Tyson screams. He jerks his arm away and runs to the door. But there are too many locks.

The Manager has gotten up and he's moving toward him.

Tyson runs around the room behind the Manager's chair where he knocks over a standing lamp to keep the Manager at bay.

TYSON

Please, don't hurt me!

He sprints toward the back of the apartment, down the hallway into the bathroom, closes the door and turns the lock.

The Manager just stands in place with an angry expression while he considers his next move.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The reindeer circle around and land the sleigh on the sidewalk in front of Teresa's modest, two-story house.

The panel on the dashboard with Teresa's name and address is flashing.

Clifford closes the book and the light on the dashboard goes out.

He runs his tongue over his teeth.

CLIFFORD

Man, I didn't even get a chance to brush my teeth.

DASHER

This is what you wanted, isn't it?  
Stop stalling.

CLIFFORD

You're right. I've got to just go  
for it. I'll just wake her up  
and...wait a minute.

DASHER

Go on, get in there. You'll think  
of something.

CLIFFORD

Yeah, maybe a note. Marley, you  
wait here.

He picks up the bag and climbs out of the sleigh.

CLIFFORD

Oh, and thanks for landing on the  
ground. I know you guys don't like  
to do that.

VIXEN

It's just not as safe with all the  
cars. But we're pulling for you.

COMET

No pun intended.

CLIFFORD

Thanks.

Clifford sneaks up the driveway and disappears in the dark  
around the house.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

Clifford rounds the corner in back of the house. He tries to  
look in a window, but the house from the back looks dark. He  
takes a run at the back door and his energy streams through  
the keyhole.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clifford materializes running. He slams into the refrigerator  
and falls down.

Teresa is stoking the fire in the fireplace when she hears the noise. She listens and hears a groan. She takes the fireplace poker with her to investigate.

Clifford sits up and hears someone coming. He pulls his bag and scoots backwards in the opposite direction. He goes out the opposite arched doorway into a hallway and gets around the corner.

Teresa holds the poker with both hands while she checks the dark kitchen. The back door. Locked.

Clifford takes a quick peek, sees no one, and pulls up his sleeve to reach back for the bag on the opposite side of the arched doorway.

At that same time, Teresa turns the corner and she's headed for the door. In the dark, she doesn't notice the bag on the left side of the door or the arm reaching across the doorway from the right to pull it toward him.

Teresa trips over the bag and goes down hard in the hallway. The poker flies out of her hands.

She smashes facedown onto the hardwood floor and for a moment she's disoriented. She rolls over on her back and opens her eyes to see Clifford on all fours leaning over her.

CLIFFORD

I'm sorry. Are you alright?

Without warning, she throws a right and socks him in the jaw. Clifford is momentarily stunned.

Teresa turns and starts to crawl toward the poker just a few feet from her head.

Clifford tackles her just before her hand reaches the poker. She's lying on her stomach. He has his arms around her waist and his head on her back, lying on top of her.

CLIFFORD

Teresa, it's me. Clifford. The guy from high school.

TERESA

Do what you want. Just don't hurt my children.

CLIFFORD

I'm not gonna hurt anyone. Just let me explain. Can I let you up?

TERESA

Yes.

He lets go of her and gets up on his knees.

Teresa scrambles for the poker. She grabs it and springs to her feet with the poker held high, ready to strike.

Clifford goes from his knees to sitting on the back of his legs. He raises his hands, surrendering.

CLIFFORD

Okay. Okay. I give. I just came to drop off some presents.

TERESA

You're the Second-Story Santa, aren't you?

CLIFFORD

Why does everybody keep saying that? I don't even look like that guy. I'm slim, for christsakes. I'm black.

TERESA

Then how'd you get in here?

CLIFFORD

Okay, I'll explain all that, but first I've got to tell you something. And this is the gospel truth. Don't laugh. I'm Santa Claus.

TERESA

I swear, one false move and I'll brain you.

CLIFFORD

I know it's hard to believe, but I can show you.

TERESA

Stay on your knees. Or on second thought, lie down with your hands behind your head.

Clifford continues to sit on the back of his legs.

CLIFFORD

If I could just get my bag, I could show you.

TERESA

I mean it, get down! How do I know  
you don't have some kind of weapon?

A toilet flushes nearby. Lena appears from around the corner.  
She takes out her earplugs.

LENA

Oh, you've got company. How nice.

TERESA

Mom, quick, call the police. I  
think we've caught the Second-Story  
Santa.

LENA

But that boy's skinny and black.

CLIFFORD

Exactly. Only I prefer the term  
slim.

LENA

Wait a minute. Aren't you that  
young man from the store?

CLIFFORD

That's right. I'm Clifford. Cliff.  
I see where your daughter gets her  
good looks.

LENA

That's true. In fact, her father,  
God bless him, was downright  
homely.

TERESA

Mom...

LENA

He used to say so himself.

TERESA

Mother, the police. Now.

LENA

But he seems like such a nice young  
man.

TERESA

He knocked me down and threw  
himself on top of me.

LENA

Well, maybe if you wouldn't play so hard to get...

She winks at Clifford, who grins back.

TERESA

Mother, the telephone. Now.

LENA

Oh, alright. But I'm sure he has a perfectly good explanation. Can I get you something? It's a shame to let that milk and cookies go to waste. They're oatmeal raisin. I baked them myself.

TERESA

Mother, the phone!

LENA

Alright. Just let me find my glasses.

Teresa rolls her eyes as her mother moseys out of the room.

TERESA

And you. I need you down on the floor. Now.

Clifford continues to sit on the back of his legs.

CLIFFORD

Fine. I'll get down, but I really wish you wouldn't call the police. They're gonna want to take me in, and that means a lot of kids, including yours, are gonna be missing a whole lot of presents.

TERESA

Wait a minute. I thought you said you didn't believe in Santa Claus. In fact, you made me doubt myself so much I was going to stay up all night to see if he actually came. But instead I caught a bad guy. A guy who I was beginning to think was one of the few good guys I'd met.

Clifford listens, touched by her words.

TERESA

I don't know if you were here to rob us or what, but this is the second time tonight you stole the magic out of Christmas.

CLIFFORD

Teresa, if you'd just let me explain.

The sound of police cars with their sirens screaming.

Teresa takes a few steps back to look out the window.

Police cars are surrounding the place, spinning on the ice when they try to stop.

TERESA

That was quick. I guess now you'll get your chance to explain.

Clifford jumps up and grabs the bag on his way out through the kitchen. He dives at the back door and streams out through the keyhole.

Teresa hesitates, with her poker held high, then walks cautiously over to the kitchen.

Outside the back door, she sees Clifford falling down.

Teresa tries to turn the back door handle, but the deadbolt is locked.

Clifford gets up and runs off around the house.

With a puzzled expression, she hurries back through the house toward the front door.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clifford stops when he sees the police.

THIRD COP

There he is.

The cops lift their guns.

FOURTH COP

Stop right there and reach for the sky.

(to fellow cops)

I always wanted to say that.

Clifford drops the bag and puts his hands in the air. He glances over at the sleigh.

The sleigh and reindeer are hovering about seven feet above the sidewalk. There's a cop car parked at an angle beneath the reindeer and another one parked right behind the sleigh, headed in the opposite direction.

CLIFFORD

I'm Santa. Don't shoot!

Clifford picks up his bag and runs down the driveway with one hand in the air while the other one holds the bag on his shoulder. He gets around one cop, who tries to tackle him, with a stiff-arm and a quick sidestep.

But he's going the wrong way, away from the sleigh, and he has to circle back around the police cars.

Four or five cops chase him around the cars, sliding on the ice, but Clifford is quick and he outmaneuvers them. He has to swing his bag at a cop, but then he sees an opening and makes a break for the sleigh.

He runs toward the police car at the back of the sleigh and leaps up on the trunk, then up onto the roof, and, tossing in the bag, he leaps up and catches the back of the sleigh.

The jaws of the cops drop as they stare in amazement.

It looks to them as though Clifford is hanging onto thin air. And climbing into an invisible sleigh. That's starting to move. Rising up in the air. They hear sleigh bells. They see Clifford disappear inside.

CLIFFORD

Merry Christmas to all and to all a  
good night.

The cops just look at each other, dumbfounded.

Teresa opens the front door and looks out at the cops gazing up at the sky. She turns to see what they're looking at and sees nothing. She hears sleigh bells fading in the distance.

INT. MANAGER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the bathroom, Tyson digs at the paint around the window with a nail file. He stops and tries to open the window. The window is painted shut.

The Manager carries a chair from the dining room over to face the bathroom door.

MANAGER

Good luck with that window. If you can get it open, I'll give you a buck. I tried with a hammer. I couldn't get it to budge.

Tyson tries to open the window one more time and gives up.

TYSON

Does that mean you're gonna hit me with a hammer?

MANAGER

Far as I can tell you're not stuck, so no. I'm not.

TYSON

But you're famous for wiping out all those soldiers during some old war. Everybody's heard you telling those stories. How you did it with your bare hands.

MANAGER

Yes, but never with a hammer.

TYSON

Yeah, but with your bare hands.

MANAGER

I was just trying to put your mind at ease about the hammer. Now please open the door.

TYSON

No way. I have friends who know where I am, so if something happens to me, they'll know who did it.

MANAGER

Oh, then your friends are involved.

TYSON

I didn't say that.

MANAGER

I suspect you did this to make your friends think you were very brave.

TYSON

I'm also a blackbelt in karate.  
It's just illegal for me to use it  
unless I'm cornered. Like now.

MANAGER

Oh, I see. So you're brave and  
you're dangerous. But I'm an old  
man and I've learned that unless  
you're being a hero, unless you're  
helping someone else, it's usually  
stupid to be brave. Are you a hero?

TYSON

Yes.

MANAGER

No, I didn't think so... what? Did  
you say yes?

TYSON

Yes.

MANAGER

Oh, well, then this is different. I  
didn't know I was dealing with a  
hero.

TYSON

If I tell you the whole story,  
would you keep it a secret?

MANAGER

Does anyone get hurt in this story?

TYSON

Just the bad guy.

MANAGER

Good, then I will keep your secret.  
Tell.

Tyson opens the door.

TYSON

We were up on the roof.

MANAGER

This roof?

TYSON

Yes, and we were throwing snowballs  
at some cars.

MANAGER

Oy veh...

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Santa walks down the icy littered sidewalk wearing his boot and shoe in the rough part of town where the storefronts have big iron bars.

Across the street, he sees a black nightclub called FANTAZTIK with a really big BOUNCER outside. Over the door, he notices a banner that says SANTA APPEARING IN PERSON ONE NIGHT ONLY.

Santa seems curious and he crosses the quiet street to check it out.

The BOUNCER looks suspicious.

BOUNCER

Can I help you?

SANTA

I saw the sign and I was wondering if maybe someone found a suit that I lost tonight.

BOUNCER

A suit? Nobody in there took your suit, old man. Now get yourself on back to the shelter before you get yourself hurt.

SANTA

Is it possible I could speak to the other Santa?

BOUNCER

What other Santa? Are you trying to tell me you're the Santa?

SANTA

If I said yes, would I get myself hurt?

BOUNCER

Where you been? You were supposed to be here two hours ago.

SANTA

Well, first I got dropped from a building and then I was in jail...

BOUNCER

Save your excuses for the boss.  
Come on. We rented you a suit.

The Bouncer grabs Santa by the coat and pulls him along toward the front door.

SANTA

A suit?

BOUNCER

(stopping momentarily)  
You can't be Santa without a suit,  
can you?

SANTA

Yes, I would have to agree.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

The news plays on a television set above the seedy bar.

NEWSMAN

Later we'll have more on the story  
from Brooklyn where Teresa  
Williams, a single mother, says she  
got a clear view tonight of the  
notorious Second-Story Santa. And  
when we come back, Brent will have  
the complete weekend weather  
forecast. Let's hope it's not more  
snow...

The Second-Story Santa sits at the bar. He looks concerned.  
He takes out a handheld PDA and punches several buttons.

The name TERESA WILLIAMS appears on the display of the  
handheld device. The screen changes, revealing an address:  
1042 Highland Ave. Brooklyn, NY

A sinister look of determination appears on his face. Leaving  
his drink, he pockets his change and walks past several other  
Santas on his way to the door.

EXT. SUBDIVISION - NIGHT

Clifford, as seen from a distance, materializes out of the  
front door of one house and runs toward the house next door.  
He materializes out of that house and runs to the next house.

The reindeer watch him from the sidewalk. They walk the sleigh down the sidewalk, following Clifford.

DASHER

We're gonna have to do something.  
This is so slow it's excruciating.

DANCER

It's pathetic. We need to find  
somebody who's not so lazy.

DASHER

Lazy? He looks like he's gonna  
collapse, he's working so hard.

DANCER

Santa works harder.

DASHER

Santa's got the boots.

DANCER

He goes faster, he jumps higher.  
And, let's face it, he's fat.

DASHER

It must be the boots.

Clifford comes running over to the reindeer. He is doubled over trying to catch his breath.

CLIFFORD

At this rate I'm never gonna get  
done by morning.

DASHER

We don't have time to search for  
Santa. You're gonna need to speed  
up.

Clifford stands up straight.

CLIFFORD

Speed up? The last time I moved  
this fast I was running from an  
insurance salesman. We've got to  
find Santa.

CUPID

(gesturing with antlers)  
Could I just say one thing? That I  
agree. With Clifford. I think this  
guy is great.

Clifford starts to speak, but Cupid keeps going.

CUPID

I think he loves Christmas. Like I do. And I think when he meets Santa, he'll love Santa. Like I do. So that's it. That's all I had to say. Just that one thing.

CLIFFORD

Thank you.

DASHER

I say we circle the area where Santa was last seen? It's worth a shot.

CLIFFORD

No. There's got to be a better way. How about the book?

He goes back to the sleigh to find the address book.

DASHER

We're just wasting time. His address is the North Pole. I'm sure that's all it says.

Clifford takes the book out of the sleigh. He stands with the reindeer while he leafs through the pages.

CLIFFORD

Santa. Santa. There. Santa Claus.

The address is illuminated when he touches it.

CLIFFORD

5934 Washington Carver Blvd. That's in Brooklyn, where I live.

DONNER

That's crazy. Santa lives at the Pole. He's got a big house.

VIXEN

We play tag in the yard.

CLIFFORD

I know. But apparently this book tells us where he is right now. I'm surprised you guys didn't know that.

VIXEN

That does sound familiar. Didn't we learn that in school?

DONNER

I think I was out that day.

CLIFFORD

Look, we've got to get to this address. It's kind of rough around there. Santa could be in trouble.

He starts back toward the sleigh. But the reindeer take off without him, moving down the sidewalk.

CLIFFORD

Wait. You need me. You're invisible!

Clifford catches up with the moving sleigh and jumps in just before it lifts off.

INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

A mostly black club with young men in suits or sweaters or shirts and ties. The women are, likewise, dressed to impress.

At the far end of the club, there's a bandstand. Next to the bandstand there's a line of women waiting to speak to Santa.

Santa sits on a tall chair at the middle of the stage. NATALIE, 27, a pretty young black woman sits on his lap.

NATALIE

I told Trent if he expected to get with me he'd better come up with a watch that said Gucci. And would you believe it, he gave me a Timex engraved with the word Gucci on the back. I don't mean he had it engraved. I mean he did it in shop class himself. Did I mention he was in high school?

Santa shakes his head.

WINSTON, 25, an athletic young man in a sweater, carries two drinks in his hands, one with an umbrella.

He works his way through the crowd over to his girlfriend, PORTIA, 24, a pretty girl with cornrows in a short skirt, standing near the end of the line waiting to talk to Santa.

WINSTON

What do you think you're doing?

PORTIA

What's it look like I'm doing? I'm standing on line.

WINSTON

What do you gotta go sit on some fat guy's lap for?

PORTIA

Because maybe he cares what I want for Christmas. Unlike some people.

WINSTON

Who says I don't care? I got you a present. I'm just not giving it to you till tomorrow.

PORTIA

That's because you haven't bought it yet.

WINSTON

No, that's because it's not even Christmas till tomorrow.

PORTIA

I think I've got a better chance of getting what I want from that guy than I do from you.

WINSTON

Fine. Hold these.

He hands her the drinks and crosses over to Santa.

PORTIA

Huh-uh. You're didn't just cut me...

Winston strides up to Santa's chair and pulls Natalie out of Santa's lap.

WINSTON

Your time's up. I'm next.

Winston plops down into Santa's lap. Santa appears to be in pain.

SANTA

I believe this young lady was next.

He indicates the next girl in line, who looks upset.

WINSTON

This'll just take a second. Look,  
my girlfriend, Portia, the one over  
there giving me the evil eye...

SANTA

Well, they all look a little upset.

WINSTON

Yeah, but she's got the cornrows.

SANTA

Oh, yes, I see. Lovely.

WINSTON

She's gonna ask what she's getting  
for Christmas and I need you to  
tell her it's a surprise.

SANTA

You haven't shopped yet?

WINSTON

(belligerent)

I've been busy. I'm getting up  
first thing in the morning.

Santa is clearly suffering under Winston's weight, and it seems to be getting worse by the second. Meanwhile, Winston squirms around, making himself comfortable.

SANTA

I understand.

WINSTON

But don't tell her that. Tell her I  
just want it to be a surprise.

SANTA

Got it.

WINSTON

And tell her I said I'd better be  
the only one getting her a present  
this year.

SANTA

Right.

WINSTON

Not like last year when she got a necklace from some guy named *Santa*.

He makes quotation marks in the air.

SANTA

Right. No necklace. No Santa.

WINSTON

Oh, and watch your hands when she gets up here. And keep your eyes on the eyes, if you know what I mean.

Santa, speechless with pain, raises his hands. Winston starts to get up, then plops himself back down.

WINSTON

Oh, and I'll take a plasma TV while you're at it. Thanks a bunch.

Winston jumps up and Santa holds his hand up to stop the next person in line. He needs a moment to recover.

INT. MANAGER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tyson sits cross-legged in the doorway on the bathroom floor.

TYSON

So the plan was to run in, get the keys and run back out while you were chasing my friends, but when I saw you had the keys, I decided to hide until you went to sleep.

MANAGER

That's not a bad plan, except that I'm a very light sleeper.

TYSON

Are you going to tell my parents?

MANAGER

I'm thinking that's something you should do yourself.

TYSON

Yeah, I guess. But shouldn't we deliver the presents first?

MANAGER

Why couldn't you wait till morning  
and take them door to door?

TYSON

Because kids are gonna get up and  
think they didn't get any presents.

MANAGER

But won't the parents get up first?

TYSON

Are you kidding? Not on Christmas  
morning. We wait all year for this.

MANAGER

How about their parents? Couldn't  
we just wake them?

Tyson eyes him closely, and grins.

TYSON

Did you say we?

The manager grins, shrugs his shoulders, nods his head.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Portia is sitting on Santa's lap.

PORTIA

So what did Winston tell you about  
my present?

SANTA

He said it's a surprise.

PORTIA

He didn't get it yet, did he? We  
were supposed to exchange presents  
tonight. I gave him a sweater.

SANTA

Yes, I noticed. Cashmere. Very  
nice. But just in case he hasn't  
had a chance to shop yet, what  
should I tell him you'd like?

PORTIA

What I'd like is a new boyfriend.

SANTA

I'm sorry, but I can't help you  
with that.

PORTIA

No, but you could do one thing. You  
could help me make him jealous.

Portia jumps up off his lap.

SANTA

No, I really couldn't...

She pulls him up to his feet and drags him reluctantly down  
the steps to the dance floor over the protests of the girls  
waiting their turn in line.

Portia spins Santa around and leads him through a series of  
convoluted dance moves until he loosens up and starts getting  
into the music.

The crowd forms a circle around them, cheering them on.

Winston stands at the edge of the circle, seething. He  
squeezes the drinks in his hands until they break.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB/STREET - NIGHT

The reindeer slide into view just above and to the side of an  
early model Buick parked on the street across from the club.

Clifford steps down from the sleigh onto the roof of the  
Buick.

Across the street, the BOUNCER looks up to see Clifford  
standing on the roof of his car.

Clifford is looking around for the best way to get down from  
the snow-covered car.

BOUNCER

Whoa. Whoa. Whoa.

He jogs across the quiet street.

BOUNCER

What you doing ho-ho-ho'ing on the  
top of my Buick?

CLIFFORD

Would you mind helping a brother  
down?

BOUNCER

I'll be yanking a brother down if  
he don't get his shoes off my roof.

CLIFFORD

Right. No need for violence.

Clifford sits on the side of the roof and slides down the  
rear window to the trunk and off the side to the ground.

CLIFFORD

I'm looking for Santa Claus.

BOUNCER

Have you looked in a mirror?

CLIFFORD

No, this is the old-fashioned  
Santa. Long beard, big belly, the  
works.

BOUNCER

We've just got the guy we hired to  
play Santa for the night.

CLIFFORD

Look, I know this is a long shot,  
but is there any chance he was  
wearing one boot?

BOUNCER

Yeah, what's up with the boot?

CLIFFORD

(to the reindeer)

Hey, guys. It's him! He's right  
inside.

BOUNCER

Who you talking to?

CLIFFORD

The reindeer.

BOUNCER

What reindeer?

CLIFFORD

Never mind. Just do me a favor and  
let Santa know that someone outside  
has his boot.

BOUNCER

We gave him boots with the costume.  
And, besides, you don't have a  
boot. You've got galoshes and a  
running shoe. Not a great look.

CLIFFORD

I'm not wearing the boot, but I  
have it. It's right there in the  
sleigh.

He points up at the invisible to everyone else reindeer and  
sleigh hovering over the Buick.

BOUNCER

What sleigh?

CLIFFORD

Alright, you're not gonna believe  
this, but there's a sleigh and  
eight talking reindeer hovering  
right above your Buick. But don't  
worry. They already went.

The Bouncer strains his eyes to see the sleigh. He looks at  
Clifford. He takes out his cell phone and dials 911.

BOUNCER

I'm calling the cops to come and  
get you. And don't touch that car  
or I'll have to hurt you.

He starts back across the street.

Clifford turns to Dasher.

CLIFFORD

What can I do?

DASHER

No idea.

DONNER

Yeah, me too. I'm stumped.

CLIFFORD

I've noticed you guys aren't really  
big on suggestions.

DASHER

What do you expect? We're reindeer,  
not dolphins.

DONNER

Yeah, you want smart you should talk to the Easter Bunny. He's a real egghead.

VIXEN

He knows eggs.

Clifford looks at the Bouncer, talking on the phone, crossing the street back to the club.

Taking a deep breath, Clifford dashes across the street and leaps up onto the Bouncer's back.

The Bouncer drops his phone and reaches back to pull Clifford off his shoulders. But Clifford holds on, wrapping his legs around the Bouncer. The Bouncer bends over and turns around, trying to throw him off over his head.

Clifford twists the Bouncer's head up with one hand and uses his other hand to point back at the Buick with his arm outstretched.

The Bouncer looks up and his eyes get big and his jaw drops several inches. He seems to have forgotten all about Clifford on his back.

CLIFFORD

You see it, don't you? Now do you believe me?

BOUNCER

You really are Santa...

CLIFFORD

(proudly)

Yeah. I really am.

The Bouncer continues to stare at the sleigh in amazement.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tyson turns off the television and punches Desmond and Randall to rouse them from their sleep.

TYSON

Guys, wake up. Come on. Wake up. The Manager's gonna help us.

Randall wakes up pushing buttons as though he's still in the game.

DESMOND

That's great, but there's a little problem.

RANDALL

A big little problem.

DESMOND

Yeah, there's no presents left in the bag.

Tyson looks down at the bag on the floor. It looks full.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Manager and the three boys stand around the Santa bag in the hallway.

MANAGER

What do you mean there's no presents? It's obviously full.

DESMOND

There were presents in there for me and my little sister and Randall found one for him, but then it was empty.

MANAGER

But the bag is all puffy.

He reaches into the bag and pulls out a present. He reads the card.

MANAGER

To Seymour, from Santa.

TYSON

Who's Seymour?

MANAGER

That's me. I got a present.

He seems to be in shock.

MANAGER

I never got a present from Santa before.

DESMOND

Never?

MANAGER

No. Never.

RANDALL

Wow.

TYSON

Hey, maybe there's something for me  
after all.

He reaches into the bag and pulls out a present.

TYSON

Look, it's got my name on it.

DESMOND

Check it again. See what else is in  
there.

Tyson sticks his hand in again and feels all around but he  
finds nothing else.

TYSON

It's empty.

DESMOND

That doesn't make sense.

He checks the bag himself, but he can find nothing.

DESMOND

Nothing.

MANAGER

There's something strange about  
that bag.

DESMOND

You think?

MANAGER

I want to try something. Here, hold  
my present.

He hands his present to Randall.

MANAGER

Guard that with your life.

Randall looks scared. He nods his head vigorously.

The Manager picks up the bag and carries it to the door of  
the next apartment. He leans the bag against the door.

MANAGER

The Garner's live here. What's their little girl's name?

DESMOND

Cynthia.

MANAGER

Tyson, I want you to reach into the bag and pull out whatever you find.

TYSON

But we already know it's empty.

MANAGER

Check.

Tyson reaches into the bag and his expression changes. He pulls out a long present, so long that Desmond has to help.

MANAGER

Well?

Tyson checks the card.

TYSON

To Cindy.

The boys looks baffled. The Manager nods.

MANAGER

From Santa.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

By this time all the other girls in line have joined Santa and Portia on the dance floor. They dance in three lines and their movements are synchronized.

The music finally comes to the end, and the crowd applauds.

Portia glances at Winston on the sidelines and gives Santa a peck on the cheek. Santa blushes. But then someone yanks him around and gives him a push on the chest that knocks him back several steps.

Winston gets up in his face.

WINSTON

You don't think I'm gonna stand around and let you mac on my girl. Go ahead. Take your best shot.

SANTA  
I was only dancing.

WINSTON  
Right, if you're just dancing, then  
I'm just cutting in.

He pounds his right fist into the palm of his left hand. The Bouncer grabs him with a full nelson from behind.

BOUNCER  
What you doing messing with Santa?

WINSTON  
That's not Santa. That's just some  
guy in a fake beard hitting on my  
girlfriend.

BOUNCER  
No, that's the real Santa. See.

He reaches out and yanks Santa's beard.

SANTA  
Ouch.

BOUNCER  
(to Santa)  
There's a skinny black Santa with a  
sleigh outside.

Santa sighs, then suddenly he realizes something.

SANTA  
Skinny?

The Bouncer nods his head.

With a look of concern, Santa heads for the door.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Santa comes out of the nightclub followed by a crowd of club people.

SANTA  
Oh, there you are. We're gonna have  
to hurry. Where are those silly  
reindeer?

Santa throws his arm over Clifford's shoulder. The reindeer and sleigh appear parked at the curb.

CLIFFORD

The bouncer said we could park in  
the red.

BOUNCER

(to Winston)

There are actually reindeer right  
there.

WINSTON

Where?

BOUNCER

You can't see them. Just listen.  
Sleigh bells.

Winston listens.

Santa walks toward the sleigh and the sleigh disappears as he  
loses contact with Clifford.

SANTA

We can turn off the disappearing  
device. I don't suppose the  
reindeer told you that.

Santa steps up into the invisible sleigh and disappears.

SANTA

There's a switch.

After a moment, the sleigh reappears. Now everyone can see  
it. The crowd reacts in awe.

SANTA

It turns itself off after a while  
if you forget and leave it on.

Santa sits down and puts on his other boot.

SANTA

And I don't suppose they told you  
about the spare suit and boots in  
the trunk.

CLIFFORD

No, they didn't mention the trunk.  
And I figured the boots were just  
for looks.

Santa stands up to talk to the reindeer.

SANTA  
You didn't tell him about the  
boots?

VIXEN  
We weren't sure what they were for.

SANTA  
They never study. They're always  
playing reindeer games. That's  
going to stop.

VIXEN  
Yes, Santa.

SANTA  
The boots, they give you speed.  
Could I borrow your belt?

Clifford quickly pulls off his belt and hands it to Santa,  
who throws it on right over the fake belt he's wearing.

Santa picks up the bag and disappears in a speedy flash.

Everyone's head is turned in the direction in which his light  
trail disappeared.

But the light trail reappears coming from the opposite  
direction. Santa stops behind Clifford who is looking the  
other way. Santa taps his shoulder. Clifford jumps.

Santa hands him the belt.

SANTA  
See, I just delivered presents to  
all of the Bronx.

CLIFFORD  
You say there's a spare suit in the  
trunk?

SANTA  
Let me show you.

Santa walks around to the back of the sleigh and opens a  
large compartment. He reaches in and takes out a pair of  
boots. He hands them to Clifford.

SANTA  
Here, these should fit.

Clifford leans over and pulls them on. As soon as he pulls on the second boot, his body expands to fill the suit and he grows a long white beard.

CLIFFORD  
Wow. Now I really do feel like  
Santa.

SANTA  
Yeah, it's the boots.

Dasher leans over to Dancer.

DASHER  
Told ya.

Clifford reaches for the bag.

CLIFFORD  
Do you mind if I give it a try?

SANTA  
Go right ahead.

Clifford takes off running in a stream of light and quickly returns. He's breathing hard.

CLIFFORD  
I just finished off New Jersey.

SANTA  
You've got to pace yourself if  
you're gonna last all night.

CLIFFORD  
You want me to deliver presents?

SANTA  
It's after two o'clock. If you  
don't help, there's not a chance  
it's gonna get done. Think of  
Teresa and her children.

Clifford, surprised, quickly considers this.

CLIFFORD  
We could use another sleigh.

SANTA  
Good. Got that right here.

He reaches in the trunk and pulls out a sleigh that magically expands to full size as it leaves the trunk. It looks high-tech and shiny.

SANTA

This is the sports model. I just take the old sleigh out on Christmas Eve. It's a tradition. But this baby can really fly.

CLIFFORD

Do you mind if I take the old sleigh?

Santa takes the spare Santa suit out of the back compartment of the old sleigh and tosses it into the new one.

SANTA

Alright, but you've only got a few hours to cover everything east of the Mississippi.

Santa follows Clifford back to the traditional sleigh.

CLIFFORD

I can do it.

SANTA

And take it easy on the milk and cookies. They can really slow you down.

Santa throws the toy bag over his shoulder.

CLIFFORD

How about the toy bag? Do you have another one of those?

SANTA

There should be one in the sleigh.

Clifford looks around inside the traditional sleigh.

CLIFFORD

I don't think so. I was chasing some kids with a bag just like that one when I discovered the sleigh.

SANTA

We're gonna have to get it back.

CLIFFORD

It should be somewhere in my building. I just have to find it.

SANTA

I hope you understand that if you don't find it and find it fast, then Christmas isn't gonna happen for a whole lot of boys and girls.

CLIFFORD

I understand.

In a hurry, Clifford turns and picks up the reins to the sleigh.

CLIFFORD

Up Dasher and Dancer, Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid, and Donner...

The sleigh speeds off throwing Clifford back into his seat.

CLIFFORD

...and Blitzen...

The crowd cheers and runs out into the empty street to watch the sleigh fly out of sight.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tyson pulls out another present and leaves it by the door.

The Manager and the boys look back at all the presents that they've pulled out and left in the hallway. There's at least one present in front of every door.

MANAGER

The bag's empty again. That means we're done with this floor.

DESMOND

We can't just leave all these presents in the hallway.

TYSON

We've got to get them inside.

MANAGER

Look, it's already after two. What if we just rang the doorbells?

RANDALL

Is that what Santa would want us to do?

DESMOND

I thought we made it clear that it's wasn't gangsta to believe in Santa.

(to Tyson)

Right?

TYSON

(uncertainly)

Right.

RANDALL

Look, how else can you explain that presents keep coming out of an empty bag?

No one has an answer.

RANDALL

And that means the guy we pulled off the fire escape wasn't the Second-Story Santa. He was the real Santa after all.

TYSON

And that means he could be lying in the garbage bin downstairs.

The boys look at each other.

DESMOND

What are we waiting for?

Desmond and Randall and Tyson take off running.

MANAGER

(quietly)

No running on the stairs.

The Manager shrugs his shoulders and looks around at all the presents.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - STREET

Santa carries the fake Santa costume and one boot over to the Bouncer standing on the edge of the crowd.

SANTA

I won't be needing this.

BOUNCER

Let me get you your money. The club still owes you for playing Santa.

SANTA

Oh, believe me, I wasn't playing. And, for all your help, I suspect there's going to be something extra under your tree this year.

BOUNCER

Thanks, Santa.

Santa expertly exchanges a black soul handshake with the Bouncer. They bump fists and grin.

Santa crosses to the sleigh when he's approached by Winston.

WINSTON

Santa, I'd like to apologize for the way I acted inside. And if you need help with the deliveries...  
(confidentially)  
...Portia would be so impressed she'd probably forget all about her present.

SANTA

Well, I think deliveries we've got covered, but I do appreciate the thought.

Santa reaches into his bag and hands Winston a present.

SANTA

Here, give her this. I'm sure she'll be more than impressed.

Winston is visibly touched, teary.

WINSTON

I love you, man. Ever since I was little. I always have.

Winston throws his arms around Santa and gives him a hug. He lays his head on his shoulder. Santa tenderly pats his back.

SANTA

I know.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

All three boys stand on boxes looking over the side of the garbage bin.

The sleigh and reindeer silently drop into view behind them in the alley as they speak.

TYSON  
We killed Santa.

DESMOND  
No, he's not in there, so he must be alive.

TYSON  
When I was in the Manager's place, there was a guy named Claus who said he'd left his bag of toys inside. The police took him away.

RANDALL  
I heard sleigh bells on the roof.

Clifford steps out of the sleigh.

DESMOND  
We've got to do something. We've got to find Santa. Give him back his bag.

CLIFFORD  
(forcefully)  
You three hold it right there.

Desmond looks around and sees Clifford. The sleigh behind him is invisible.

DESMOND  
It's the Second-Story Santa. Run!

The boys make a dash for the back door. Tyson kicks the box holding the back door open to make it shut behind them.

Clifford sighs and strides over to the door. He turns into a red and white stream of energy that slips into the building through the keyhole.

INT. BUILDING

Desmond leads the boys running for their lives up the stairs with Tyson close behind.

Randall is tiring, falling further and further behind.

Clifford stands at the bottom of the stairs and listens as the boys' feet pound the steps. He takes off in a flash at super-speed up the stairs.

He stops at the top of the third floor to wait for Randall, who is looking back over his shoulder, to turn his head around to see him. Randall finally looks around.

CLIFFORD

Boo.

Randall stops suddenly just a foot away from Clifford at the top of the stairs. Flapping his arms, he falls backwards, frightened as though he's seen a ghost.

But Clifford moves at lightning speed and gets behind him to catch him by the armpits before his back hits the stairs.

CLIFFORD

I want my bag. Where is it?

RANDALL

Please, don't hurt me.

CLIFFORD

What did you do with my bag?

RANDALL

The manager has it. He's on the sixth floor.

Clifford quickly puts Randall's back down on the stairs and takes off at super-speed.

Screaming, Randall slides stiffly on his back headfirst down the stairs.

Clifford suddenly stops on the stairs and rushes back down to catch Randall by the feet just before his head hits the wall at the bottom of the stairs.

Randall looks up at Clifford, obviously unhurt, and watches wide-eyed as Clifford super-speeds off up the stairs.

INT. BUILDING

Desmond and Tyson come out of the stairwell on the sixth floor running as hard as they can.

They find the Manager sitting on one of the larger packages.

DESMOND

It's the Second-Story Santa. He's got Randall. Run.

The Manager gets up and grabs the bag of toys. He follows the boys to the elevator that's open nearby.

MANAGER

First floor. Quick. We'll call the police.

INT. ELEVATOR

Tyson pushes the button for the first floor. The doors close. The three of them sigh with relief.

Then suddenly a red and white stream of energy materializes into the oversized Clifford. He pushes the button to stop the elevator.

Desmond and the Manager grab each other for support.

Tyson, pinned in the corner behind Clifford's back, lets out a muffled cry for help.

Clifford moves to free Tyson, who presses himself in fright to the corner of the elevator.

CLIFFORD

Seymour, what's going on here? How come you've got Santa's magic bag?

MANAGER

Clifford? Is that you? Man, what have you been eating?

CLIFFORD

It's the holidays. But don't worry. I've started running. Really fast.

MANAGER

The boys found the bag on the fire escape.

CLIFFORD  
I thought they were trying to steal  
the toys.

DESMOND  
We were just trying to help.

Tyson nods his head.

TYSON  
Yeah, we didn't want the kids to  
wake up without any presents.

CLIFFORD  
Don't worry. I'll take it from  
here. But the regular Santa and I  
both really appreciate your help.

DESMOND  
So you're not the Second-Story  
Santa?

CLIFFORD  
(grinning)  
No, but now I see where you could  
get confused.

Clifford pushes the elevator buttons.

TYSON  
But we heard Randall scream. What  
did you do?

CLIFFORD  
Well, I scared him. And my guess is  
he's gone home to change his pants.

DESMOND  
Santa, are you sure we didn't mess  
up Christmas?

The elevator door opens. Clifford picks up the magic toy bag.

CLIFFORD  
No, I think we can save it. But  
I've got to go. Merry Christmas.  
And Happy Hanukkah.

He winks at Seymour and dashes off out of the elevator at  
super-speed.

The boys and the Manager rush out of the elevator to watch.

Clifford delivers the presents lying in the hallway at super-speed. His energy goes under the doors and materializes long enough to pick up another present. In a red and white flash the presents are gone and Clifford has disappeared.

TYSON

Wow.

EXT. WORLD MAP

A world map focused on North America shows a red line moving at high speed as if drawn on an Etch A Sketch up and down the left side of the continent west of the Mississippi River. This is Santa's route.

The line runs from the south of Mexico to the top of Canada. Gradually it's working its way toward the Pacific Ocean. As the line goes up and down, the map fills in the space between the lines. The map turns red.

Suddenly a red line leaves New York City and makes lines back and forth that color in the northeastern states as well as the eastern part of Canada. This is Clifford's route.

When the northeastern seaboard is entirely red, the red line crosses Canada heading west moving up and down until it reaches the red section of Canada that Santa has already covered.

Then the red line heads south, but first it stops in the middle of Lake Superior.

CLIFFORD (V.O.)

Why are you guys stopping here?  
There's nothing but water?

DASHER (V.O.)

Rest stop.

Clifford hears the sound of water hitting the lake below.

CLIFFORD (V.O.)

Oh.

The sound of the water stops and the red line continues south moving back and forth across the mid-western states east of the Mississippi River.

It keeps moving south until it reaches the Gulf of Mexico. It crosses to the Caribbean Islands where it covers them in red. Then it moves back up to Florida and heads north, going back and forth.

The red line fills in the southeastern states as it makes its way back to New York.

By the time it reaches New York City, the whole eastern half of North America is red.

On the western side, Santa's red line has just reached Los Angeles as it works its way west.

Pulling back for a larger view of the map reveals that the whole world is covered in red.

And that the map of the world is in fact drawn on a classic Etch A Sketch.

And that the Etch A Sketch is being placed by Clifford's hand with other presents underneath a magnificent Christmas tree.

EXT. DELIVERY TRUCK - NIGHT

A white panel truck with a ladder attached to the side and a magnetic sign that says JACK OF ALL TRADES - PLUMBING AND PAINTING slowly pulls up and parks on a quiet residential street.

From inside the truck, the icy window is rolled down revealing the front of Teresa's house across the street.

The Second-Story Santa gets out of the truck and looks both ways before he takes down the ladder and crosses the street.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The sleigh flies over Manhattan and crosses the river next to the bridge into Brooklyn.

INT. SLEIGH

Clifford looks down at the digital read-out on the dash of the sleigh. Teresa's address turns from solid green to flashing red. Clifford looks concerned. He stands up to address the reindeer.

CLIFFORD

Hey, guys, why would the address display on the dashboard flash red?

The antlers of all the reindeer turn up like hands as the shoulders go up with a unanimous shrug.

CLIFFORD  
You don't know? What a surprise.

He turns to Marley.

CLIFFORD  
There's something wrong. I can feel  
it.

He stands up to address the reindeer.

CLIFFORD  
Hey, guys, Teresa and her kids are  
in trouble. Step on it.

The reindeer glance at each other with a smirk, nod their heads, and shoot off like a bullet.

Clifford gets thrown so hard he rolls backwards over the seat until he's hanging on by his fingers to the back of the sleigh with his body dangling behind it.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

The Second-Story Santa climbs through the window of the bedroom where the children are sleeping.

He stops long enough to close his switchblade knife and put it in his coat pocket. He goes out the open door and closes it behind him.

He walks lightly down the hallway to the second bedroom. He stops outside the door and puts his hand in the pocket where he put the knife. He peeks into the room.

There's no one in the bedroom. The bed's still neatly made.

The Second-Story Santa looks around. He heads for the stairs.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS

Teresa sleeps in her chair in front of the fireplace.

The Second-Story Santa steps lightly down the stairs. He stops and listens. He crosses over to the Christmas tree.

He looks down at the presents, tempted, when he hears the sound of someone breathing in their sleep. He puts his hand in his pocket and circles around to see who it is.

Teresa sleeps soundly in her chair.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

Teresa?

Teresa opens her eyes and sees the Second-Story Santa standing over her. She smiles.

TERESA

Santa?

After a moment, a grin crosses his face. He nods his head.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

Have you ever seen me before?

TERESA

No, never. But this is the first time I ever waited up.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

Some people are disappointed that I don't have a long white beard.

TERESA

Not me. I'm not disappointed at all. I'm just glad to find out that you're real.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

Good. That makes it so much easier to do what I have to do.

TERESA

What do you mean?

There's a pounding knock at the door.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

Who's that?

TERESA

I don't know. Maybe it's the police.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

The police? What are they doing here?

TERESA

Maybe they caught The Second-Story Santa. I might be a witness.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

Alright, well, whoever it is, get rid of them.

TERESA

Don't you want them to see you?

SECOND-STORY SANTA

No, I only came to talk to you.

TERESA

Alright. I'll see what they want.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

Okay. But don't worry. Whoever it is, you're safe with me.

TERESA

Right.

Teresa goes over to the door and peeks out. She sees Clifford, a hundred pounds heavier with a bag over his shoulder. She looks angry. She opens the main door, but she leaves the security door shut.

TERESA

What are you doing here?

CLIFFORD

Teresa, are you alright? The light on the dash was flashing red and I got worried.

TERESA

You should be worried. The police are looking for you. But they're looking for someone a lot thinner.

CLIFFORD

I know. It's the boots. But I'm glad you're alright. I need to get these presents under the tree before your kids wake up.

TERESA

Wait a minute. You can't make up for breaking into the house and assaulting me with a couple of presents. I can't even believe you'd show your face here after last night.

CLIFFORD

So you didn't see me fly away in the sleigh?

TERESA

What sleigh? All I saw was a skinny black Santa who broke into my house.

CLIFFORD

Okay, I'm slim. I mean, most of the time. But I didn't break in. I'm Santa Claus. The real Santa. I can prove it.

TERESA

Now I know you're lying because the real Santa Claus happens to be right here in this house.

CLIFFORD

Do you mean you're the real Santa? You know, because you buy presents?

TERESA

No, not me. I mean the real St. Nick. The original Santa Claus himself.

CLIFFORD

Santa's here? That's strange. I didn't see his sleigh.

Clifford calls out to Santa inside.

CLIFFORD

Santa? Are you in there? It's me. Clifford. From the nightclub.

Teresa looks across the living room at The Second-Story Santa. He is shaking his hands to indicate that he doesn't want to be seen.

TERESA

He doesn't want to see you. Probably because of the way you've been acting. You know, not nice.

CLIFFORD

Wait. There's something wrong here. The Santa I know wouldn't just brush me off. I've spent the whole night delivering presents.

TERESA

Look, he said no, so you're not getting in. I suggest you go away before I call the police.

She closes the door in Clifford's face.

TERESA

Can you believe that? He's trying to tell me that he's the real Santa.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

As soon as he's gone, we'll get back to business.

TERESA

Is there something you want me to do?

SECOND-STORY SANTA

No, we just need to tie up a few loose ends.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE

Clifford goes around the house, trying to look in. But when he gets to the backyard, he sees the ladder going up to the second-story bedroom window.

He goes at super-speed up the ladder into the bedroom.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - VARIOUS ROOMS

Clifford pauses long enough to check the kids. Then he super-speeds around the hallway and down the stairs.

He stops at the bottom of the stairs to look around.

Teresa stands with her back turned, peeking through the drapes.

TERESA

It looks like he's gone. But we should probably give him another minute.

The Second-Story Santa picks up a pillow from the couch and slowly creeps up behind her.

Clifford sees the pillow and super-speeds around to pull it out of his hands.

The Second-Story Santa feels Clifford take the pillow and looks around.

Clifford stands across the room with the pillow.

CLIFFORD  
Looking for this?

TERESA  
Clifford! How did you get in here?

CLIFFORD  
The same way he did. Up the ladder to the kid's room. And I caught him red-handed with this.

TERESA  
That's a pillow.

CLIFFORD  
Yes, but he was just about to attack you with it.

TERESA  
With a pillow? Clifford, please, you're delusional. You need help.

CLIFFORD  
He also had this in his pocket.

Clifford pulls the switchblade out of his own pocket. The knife springs open.

SECOND-STORY SANTA  
Trust me. Someone's gonna get hurt with a knife like that.

TERESA  
Clifford, please, put down the knife.

CLIFFORD  
Okay, I'm gonna throw it into the other room where he can't get it.

He throws the knife, but it slips and goes through a window, breaking it.

CLIFFORD  
Sorry. I can fix that.

TERESA

Clifford, listen to me. This is Santa Claus. The real Santa Claus.

CLIFFORD

Right, and I'm the Easter bunny. I met the real Santa Claus tonight. I'm guessing he's The Second-Story Santa.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

He's just saying that because he's the Second-Story Santa himself. But don't you worry. I'll protect you.

He runs at Clifford and tackles him and the pillow flies out of his hand. The Second-Story Santa quickly climbs on top of Clifford.

SECOND-STORY SANTA

I'll show you who's real and who's not.

He draws back to punch Clifford, but Clifford quickly moves his head at the last second and the Second-Story Santa smashes his hand into the hardwood floor. He winces in pain.

Clifford rolls the thief off the top of him.

At super-speed Clifford grabs Teresa and carries her up the stairs into the children's room. All she sees is a blurred trail of light as she falls into a pile of stuffed animals and the door to the room is closed and locked.

Clifford speeds back down the stairs where the Second-Story Santa surprises him with a series of karate kicks and punches. Clifford seems stunned, but he shakes it off, and dodges the next few punches.

Clifford throws a fast punch that connects, but the Second-Story Santa hardly seems to notice. Clifford, on the other hand, reacts as though he broke his own fist.

The Second-Story Santa grabs Clifford's beard to hold him in place so he can punch him. Clifford tries to move away, but the Second-Story Santa holds on with both hands and Clifford drags him at high speed around the room.

Finally Clifford stops, with the Second-Story Santa hanging on to his beard.

CLIFFORD

Ouch!

The Second-Story Santa swings Clifford around by his beard and smashes his head into the wall. Then he lifts Clifford up over his head and spins him around and smashes him onto the floor. Clifford doesn't move.

The Second-Story Santa looks down at him. He gives him a kick in the ribs.

SECOND-STORY SANTA  
Merry Christmas.

Clifford opens his eyes and sees the Second-Story Santa going up the stairs. He looks around and sees a string of colored lights wrapped around the fireplace.

He picks himself up, slowly at first, picking up speed as he goes. He grabs the string of lights and yanks it off the wall. Then he rushes up the stairs and grabs the Second-Story Santa as he reaches the top.

Clifford wraps his arms around him from behind and falls backwards down the stairs.

Clifford lands on top when they reach the bottom of the stairs.

At super-speed, he wraps the string of lights around the Second-Story Santa from head to toe.

He stands him up and throws him over his shoulder. He moves toward the front door, opens it, and takes off at super-speed.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Clifford whizzes past a cop who's just going out the front door of the station. He speeds across the room and drops the Second-Story Santa on the Night Sergeant's desk. He plugs in the string of lights, lighting him up.

CLIFFORD  
This is The Second-Story Santa.  
Merry Christmas.

The Night Sergeant, dumbfounded, looks down at The Second-Story Santa. He looks back up and Clifford has disappeared.

SECOND-STORY SANTA  
I'm Santa Claus.

NIGHT SERGEANT

Just what I needed. Another one.  
Let's go.

He slaps the handcuffs on and drags him off to jail.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - DAWN

Clifford materializes inside the front door with his bag of toys and moves toward the stairs. He's takes a few steps up when he hears Teresa call to him from downstairs.

TERESA

Clifford?

Clifford stops and goes back down the stairs. When he reaches the bottom, he sees a fireplace poker swinging at his head. He ducks and the poker hits the wall.

CLIFFORD

Wait. I can explain.

TERESA

What did you do with Santa Claus?

CLIFFORD

I took him to the police station.  
That guy was a thief.

TERESA

You did all that in less than three minutes? That's impossible. You're crazy. I want you out. Get out.

CLIFFORD

But what about the toys? And the window?

TERESA

I mean it. Out! Not just out of my house, but out of my life! Get out!

Teresa swings the poker walking toward him until he backs toward the front door. He opens the door and steps outside.

TERESA

Three times you ruined Christmas. In one night. I never want to see you again. I'll get a restraining order if I have to. Or you can wait right there and tell your story to the cops.

She closes the door.

Clifford looks even more dejected than he did when he first lost her at the store.

He takes his bag of toys and shuffles back toward the sleigh.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE

Teresa crosses the living room with the phone to her ear.

TERESA  
 (on phone)  
 He's the same guy who broke in last night. Only heavier.  
 (listens)  
 Right now? He may still be outside.  
 Hold on. I'll check.

She puts down the phone and goes to the front window to open the drapes. Terence and Abby stumble into the room.

TERESA  
 Terence, Abby. I told you to wait upstairs.

As the drapes open, Terence and Abbey stare at something outside the front window.

ABBY  
 Look, it's Santa.

TERESA  
 No, he's just dressed like that.  
 It's the guy you saw at the store last night.

ABBY  
 I don't know about you, but we saw Santa at the store last night.

They watch as he climbs up and disappears inside the invisible sleigh.

TERENCE  
 Where's Santa? Where did he go?

ABBY  
 He disappeared.

TERESA  
 Who disappeared?

ABBY

Santa Claus. He was right there on the sidewalk and he just vanished.

Lena enters the room. She takes earplugs out of each ear.

TERESA

That's not possible.

LENA

What's not possible?

ABBY

Santa just disappeared right in front of our house.

LENA

Where?

ABBY

On the sidewalk. Right there.

She points and everyone looks out the window.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - SLEIGH - DAWN

Clifford sits in the sleigh, his arm around Marley, looking depressed.

VIXEN

She doesn't want to see you?

CLIFFORD

Yeah, she kicked me out and she's calling the cops.

DONNER

You know, you don't have to use the door to get in.

DASHER

Yeah, you've still got the belt.

CLIFFORD

I know, but I've done enough damage already. And the cops are really quick around here. They'll be here any second.

VIXEN

You know, there's one thing you haven't tried yet.

CLIFFORD

No, I think I just need to go home  
and try to forget all about it.  
Again.

VIXEN

But you're forgetting about the  
magic of Christmas.

CLIFFORD

No, I understand it now. I  
understand how important it is to  
so many people.

VIXEN

Yes, but you don't have to use it  
just to make other people happy.  
You can use it to be happy  
yourself.

CUPID

Can I tell him? I want to tell him.  
Yes? No? Maybe? Not? Okay, I'll  
wait.

DANCER

Clifford. Cliff. Do we really have  
to spell it out for you? Okay. Here  
goes. S-W-I-C-K.

CLIFFORD

Swick? What's a swick?

VIXEN

No, I think there's an H in there  
someplace.

CLIFFORD

Schick? You want me to shave?  
What's the point? She'll still know  
it's me.

DONNER

He's right. Maybe it's a T.

CLIFFORD

Schtick? As in jokes? Trust me.  
She's in no mood for humor. Why  
don't you guys just tell me?

CUPID

Wait! I've got it. I think the H is  
at the end!

CLIFFORD

Stitch? Switch? Switch. You want me to flip the switch? But what about the cops? They're gonna be here any second.

VIXEN

Just do it. You'll see.

He hesitates, then flips the switch inside the sleigh.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - DAWN

Teresa has the phone to her ear when she sees something through the window.

ABBY

He's back. He's right outside! With a sleigh and real live reindeer!

TERESA

(on phone)

Wait. Uh, never mind. Sorry. I'll have to call you back.

She hangs up the phone and stares out the window.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - SLEIGH - DAWN

Clifford looks over at the house. He sees the children knocking on the window and waving to get his attention.

An enormous smile spreads across his face and he waves back enthusiastically. Even Marley looks excited.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE

Lena and the children wave with both hands.

ABBY

It's really Santa!

TERENCE

Reindeer.

Teresa doesn't seem to know what to think.

ABBY

I'm going out there.

TERENCE

Me, too.

TERESA

(half-heartedly)

Wait...

But the kids grab their coats on their way out the door.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - SLEIGH

Clifford continues to wave. Marley stands next to him on the dash, looking at the house.

MARLEY

Finally, my own backyard.

Clifford turns to Marley in disbelief.

MARLEY

Did I say that out loud?

Clifford nods his head.

MARLEY

It's the sleigh. Have you noticed?  
You're not afraid of heights.

CLIFFORD

(suddenly realizing)

Yeah. But I still think snakes are  
creepy.

Marley looks toward the house.

MARLEY

Here they come. Be cool.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - SIDEWALK

Abby and Terence come running out toward the sleigh.

Clifford and Marley get out of the sleigh with the bag of toys to meet them on the sidewalk.

ABBY

Are you really Santa?

CLIFFORD

Yes, as long as I'm wearing this suit, I'm the real Santa. And I've got your presents in this bag.

ABBY

Can I pet your dog?

CLIFFORD

Yeah, that's Marley. He likes kids as much as I do.

Abby grins at Clifford and bends down to pet Marley.

TERENCE

Can we ride in the sleigh?

Clifford looks back cautiously at Teresa, who has come out to join them.

CLIFFORD

If it's alright with your mother, I don't see why not.

ABBY

(holding Marley)

Mom, can we? Can we go for a ride?

TERENCE

Please?

Teresa, stopping a few feet away, still looks dumbfounded by the sudden appearance of the sleigh.

She looks at Clifford smiling at her with her children standing around him.

TERESA

Well, I suppose, if it's safe.

Then she looks at the sleigh and sees it moving away down the sidewalk and lifting up off the ground. She points and everyone turns to look.

CLIFFORD

Hey, guys, come back.

They watch the sleigh climb into the sky. The reindeer wave goodbye with their antlers until the sleigh disappears in the early morning light.

Clifford turns to the children.

CLIFFORD  
Maybe next year.

Then he turns to Teresa.

CLIFFORD  
I'm sorry. I didn't know they were  
just gonna leave me here.

TERESA  
Maybe they left you here for a  
reason.

CLIFFORD  
It's alright?

TERESA  
This time I might even give you a  
chance to explain.

CLIFFORD  
That'd be great. Really great. But  
first we've got to open some  
presents. What do you say?

He puts up his hand for Terence to high-five.

TERENCE  
Alright!

They all move back toward the house. Clifford carries the  
bag. Clifford smiles at Teresa as they enter the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Wearing only his socks on his feet, Clifford, shrunk to  
normal size, with no beard, stands by the tree with the  
family all around holding wrapped presents.

Clifford pulls a large present out of the bag. He checks the  
tag.

CLIFFORD  
And this last one here's for Abby.

Abby takes her present.

ABBY  
Thank you, Santa.

CLIFFORD

Okay, but after today, you can just call me Cliff.

LENA

This time next year she might be calling you something else.

THERESA

Mom!

Clifford grins at Lena, then turns to Teresa. Her eyes sparkle from the rush of emotions. Clifford can't stop grinning.

CLIFFORD

So everybody got a present, right?

ABBY

How about you? Did you get a present?

CLIFFORD

Yeah, I got a present. I got to be a part of the magic of Christmas.

He grins at Teresa.

ABBY

But, look, there's still something left in the bag.

Abby bends down and reaches into the bag.

CLIFFORD

It's strange. But it always looks like that, even when it's empty.

ABBY

There's another present. And it's really heavy.

She moves back and Clifford reaches into the bag.

CLIFFORD

Maybe I missed someone. Man, this feels like it weighs a ton.

He uses both hands and strains to drag out a present that weighs about a hundred and seventy pounds.

ABBY

Hey, look at the bag!

The bag shrivels up and disappears.

TERENCE

And your boots are gone, too.

He points to the empty spot near the door.

CLIFFORD

I guess that means all the presents  
have been delivered.

TERESA

Thanks to you.

Lena examines the last present Clifford pulled out.

LENA

It says TO CLIFFORD FROM THE  
LEPRECHAUNS. Who's that?

ABBY

Open it. I want to see.

CLIFFORD

Alright.

He tears off the wrapping and finds an elaborately carved  
latched box inside. He looks around at everyone's excited  
curiosity and opens the box. It's full of pure gold bars.

ABBY

Is that real gold?

CLIFFORD

It looks real. Wait, there's a  
note.

He opens the note and reads.

CLIFFORD

For services rendered as Santa  
Claus, your weight in gold.

LENA

Gold's worth more than six hundred  
bucks an ounce.

CLIFFORD

Wow. That means we're rich.

The kids start cheering, jumping up and down.

TERESA

Wait a minute. Don't you mean  
you're rich? It's yours.

CLIFFORD

Is that what I mean? Gosh, I hope  
not. We sounds like a lot more fun.

Clifford looks around at the excited children. He smiles at  
Teresa. After a moment, she nods her head and smiles.

CLIFFORD

Okay, let's open our presents and  
after that I'm gonna tell you guys  
an amazing Christmas story. With  
magic bags, and talking reindeer...

The kids pile into their presents. Lena grabs the video  
camera and starts shooting.

Teresa puts her present down and moves over next to Clifford  
where she wraps her arm around his elbow and smiles into his  
eyes.

LENA

Oh, for chrissakes, Santa. Kiss  
her.

Clifford's grin turns serious when he sees the agreeable look  
on Teresa's face. Their lips slowly move together for a warm  
and welcome kiss.

INT. JAIL CELL - MORNING

The fake Santas lie sleeping around the jail cell. In the  
corner, under the Magic Marker Christmas tree drawn on the  
wall, stands a huge stack of Christmas presents.

INT. SERIES OF SHOTS IN VARIOUS HOMES - MORNING

Desmond opens a box like the one that Clifford got and looks  
disappointed.

DESMOND

Gold?

Randall opens a similar box.

RANDALL

Gold?

Tyson opens a similar box.

TYSON

Gold? I wanted a laptop.

His mother and father stand over him, their mouths hanging open, apparently in shock.

The Manager bites a gold bar, sitting next to the open box.

MANAGER

Look out Miami, here I come.

FADE OUT.