

RED ONE

by
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Based on the original story by
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OMITTED

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - CHRISTMAS PARTY - NIGHT

A classic Christmas Eve large family gathering. Big tree. Caroling around the piano. Children of all ages running around. Joy and merriment, libations and big feelings.

Young JACK O'MALLEY-- age 12-- slips away. Up to something. He glides into the entryway, eyeing the piled coats and handbags, checks that the coast is clear-- then GRABS some keys from a purse.

INT. UPSTAIRS - SAME

A group of KIDS huddles around Jack, as he uses the keys to UNLOCK a closet door revealing-- A BUNCH OF WRAPPED PRESENTS.

The kids are shell-shocked. Crestfallen. Trying to process.

KID
What is this?

JACK
I told you. *We're being played.* Now pay up.

The kids start handing over candy from their pockets-- they obviously lost a bet.

KID 2
A bet's a bet.

KID
How did you find this stuff?

JACK
I told you, I can find anything or anyone.

KID 2
Then how come you can't find your dad?

JACK
Hilarious, Gene.

KID
Look, I don't know what this stuff is...
but Santa is coming tonight.

JACK
(scoffs)
Ok, can we talk about that for a minute?

ADULT (O.S.)
Jack O'Malley!

The kids all turn to the adult-- UNCLE RICK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICK
Kids, go downstairs.

Jack starts to leave, Rick stops him--

RICK
Jack... what are ya doing, pal? Look, we love having you here on the holidays. And I'm sorry about your mother's... situation. But what are you telling your cousins?

JACK
The cold hard truth.

RICK
"The cold hard truth?" Jack... these are presents, yes. But they're not *Santa's presents*.

JACK
Right. Because *Santa Claus* hasn't been here yet.

RICK
Yeah, it's Christmas Eve. He's coming tonight.

JACK
He's coming *here*. To *this house*. Tonight. That's what you're telling me?

RICK
That's what I'm telling you.

JACK
And he's also going to go to *every other house in the world*, on the same night. Using *flying reindeer* for transportation.

RICK
Yes, Jack.

JACK
Right. And what *fuels* a flying reindeer exactly?

RICK
Carrots! Look, I don't know exactly how it works, alright? All I know is, when we wake up in the morning, *Santa will have been here*.

(then)
Now, come on. You don't want to end up on the *Naughty List*, do you?

(CONTINUED)

JACK
Honestly, Uncle Rick, I'm not that worried about it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

On the mantle, a plate of cookies and a glass of milk, with a note-- "For Santa". Then Jack appears-- GRABS a cookie and takes a big bite. Then the milk-- BOTTOMS UP.

And as he GRABS the remaining cookies and heads off, we--

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. A BUSY COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Bustling with activity and decorated for Christmas.

A CARD informs us -- "*30 years later*"

A BARISTA sets down a large to-go cup in frame--

BARISTA
Christine!! Triple shot Americano!

A customer, CHRISTINE, takes her coffee to the prep area. Starts adding milk. And as she turns to reach for a sugar --

A HAND enters frame and deftly STEALS the coffee. Christine turns back a second later to discover she's pouring milk all over the counter... *and her coffee is gone.*

CHRISTINE
What the--?!

Now ON THE BACK of the presumed thief, as he strolls out the coffee shop door -- and casually filches the MORNING PAPER from under the arm of a clueless entering BUSINESSMAN.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

ECU - THE COFFEE CUP WITH "CHRISTINE!" WRITTEN ON IT

And as he finally raises the cup to his lips, we WIDEN TO REVEAL the thief is none other than:

JACK O'MALLEY. Grown-up now, having adult-ed himself into a rakish scoundrel. Still an operator and cynical to the bone; the kind of guy who smiles in your face while he picks your wallet. Speaking of... Jack checks the sports page of the paper he stole as he sips, then tosses it aside-- *gratuitous littering*-- and pulls out his phone to dial his BOOKIE--

JACK
Len, it's Jack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOOKIE (VO)
 You owe me money, O'Malley.

JACK
 I have your money, Lenny. I'm
 just... out of town right now.

BOOKIE (VO)
 Out of town. Convenient.

JACK
 Not "convenient". I'm on a job.
 Listen, you still got Moseley at
 plus four hundred?

BOOKIE (VO)
 Are you seriously trying to place
 another bet, right now?

JACK
 What part of "I have the money" don't you
 understand? So be a good little scumbag
 and put me down for fifty large on
 Moseley, alright?

BOOKIE (VO)
Fifty large? That's a lot of dough, Jack.

JACK
 You my mother now? Just place the bet. I
 gotta go. Goodbye.

Jack hangs up. Stops and looks up at-- a government building
 with a sign that reads **National Oceanic Geology
 Administration (NOGA)**.

An alert GUARD stands stationed in a booth beside the door.
 Jack notes this, then turns to look at --

THE BUSTLING LOCAL PARK ACROSS THE STREET

Jack crosses over and gets a lay of the land--

-- the center of which is dominated by a GAZEBO DECORATED FOR
 THE HOLIDAYS, blaring Christmas tunes from several outdoor
 SPEAKERS.

Among all the various activities going on in the park, Jack
 clocks: a GROUP of mostly women doing a HIIT BOOTCAMP in the
 grass... Nearby, an ADORABLE BABY in a stroller banging a
 WRAPPED LOLLIPOP against her plastic tray... A trio of HYPER
 DOGS tied to a tree with long leashes...

Jack sips his stolen coffee and opens his phone. This time,
 he checks the Instagram page for one JANINE HUMMISTON-- the
 first post is a photo of her accepting some sort of
 scientific award.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He SCROLLS down to another shot-- a selfie in workout clothes-- with the caption "**Tuesdays We HIIT It! #feeltheburn #strongbodystrongmind #outdoorlife**"

Jack looks up from his phone to the group of bootcampers-- and spots JANINE among them. *This is his mark.* And set just off to the side of her workout mat-- a towel and a small backpack.

On Jack's face-- *that's what he needs and that's what he's going to get.* He smiles-- and it's on.

He inconspicuously heads for the gazebo, with it's big PA system. Reaching it, he PULLS a flask from his pocket, opens it, takes a quick swig, then pours the rest into his coffee-- then POURS the SPIKED COFFEE into the large POWER BOX that's powering the whole thing! *BZZZT!* As he slinks away, the power box SPARKS. SHORTS. The speakers BLARE with horrific feedback!

Startled, the HIIT class turns as the sparking electrical box sets the gazebo's holiday decorations on FIRE!

HIIT INSTRUCTOR
OH MY GOSH--!?

The GUARD across the street notices the commotion and RADIOS something in.

And as the HIIT class STOPS and moves toward the gazebo--

--Jack takes the opportunity to sneak in behind them-- very risky-- move to Janine's backpack, flip it open and GRAB her laminated ID, which reads-- "**Janine Hummiston - Seismology**"

Across the street, the Guard EMERGES from the building with a FIRE EXTINGUISHER, racing to the rescue... *Abandoning his post*-- which is exactly what Jack was hoping for.

And as the Guard gets near, timing it just right, Jack UNTIES the hyped-up dogs, who immediately BOLT --

WOMAN	GUY
Clover!!!	Dusty!

-- STRAIGHT AT the running Guard, tangling his legs in their leashes and sending him sprawling to the ground! The fire extinguisher goes FLYING and when it lands, Jack casually KICKS it into the bushes-- out of sight.

And with everyone's attention on the flaming gazebo and the dogs running wild, Jack notices--

-- that baby in the stroller with the lollipop STARING RIGHT AT HIM, the only one in this whole park seemingly onto him.

(CONTINUED)

JACK
(under his breath)
What're you lookin' at?

In answer, the baby just BANGS her lollipop against the tray, smiling.

Jack takes his opportunity to BOLT across the street-- and walk right into the building, unnoticed.

INT. NOGA BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Jack loops the lanyard around his neck and casually makes his way through the halls, smiling and nodding at every lanyarded SCIENTIST he passes. He reaches a door labeled -- "Seismic Monitoring-- Access Restricted"-- SWIPES Janine's ID and -- bing! -- the door slides open.

INT. DR. JANINE'S LAB - CONTINUOUS

A supercomputer lab. Dedicated to the observation of tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanoes.

And at the heart of the room: a SUPERCOMPUTER that receives real-time data from the sea floor. Despite warnings to the contrary plastered all over it, Jack finds and opens the back of a computer and surveys its super-guts.

He PULLS from his pocket-- a small RELAY DEVICE with a USB connection and a TINY MAKESHIFT ANTENNA. He STICKS it into a hidden port inside the computer and a GREEN LED light illuminates-- it's working.

EXT. PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Mission accomplished, Jack exits the building. The Guard has apparently found the fire extinguisher and is trying to PUT OUT the gazebo as the HIIT class watches on.

With all the drama, Jack is able to stealthily return Janine's ID. But as he does so, he senses --

-- that baby. Still looking at him, almost suspiciously. *Still banging that lollipop.*

The two stare at each other for a long moment... then SMASH TO:

JACK - MOMENTS LATER

Strolling away from the mayhem in the park. The baby CRYING INCONSOLABLY behind him; the hyper dogs still RUNNING LOOSE, the HIIT class trying to catch them, the Guard trying to put out the gazebo flames, a FIRE TRUCK arriving.

As he walks away, Jack raises something into frame: the baby's LOLLIPOP. *OMG, he stole that, too!*

CONTINUED:

Jack unwraps the sucker and POPS it in his mouth. And as he SMILES WIDE at the chaos left in his wake, MUSIC RISES, leading us into the rousing, celebratory Christmas classic --

"It's the most wonderful time of the year..!"

AND WE CUT TO:THE CITY

CARD-- "*Philadelphia, PA - One Month Later*"

City of Brotherly Love. Two days before Christmas. As snow falls lightly over a SERIES OF SHOTS that offer an amusing COUNTERPOINT to Andy Williams' sweet lyrics:

-- One kid tripping another at a skating rink, the injured one wailing over:

"With the kids jingle belling..."

-- A TRAFFIC JAM OF CABS AND DELIVERY TRUCKS HONKING and YELLING at each other over:

"And everyone telling you..."

-- Crowds of pedestrians shoulder-checking each other, cursing and almost getting into fights over:

"Be of good cheer..."

-- And a comical montage of people CURSING over:

"It's the most wonderful time of the year..!"

INT. SHOPPING MALL - PHILADELPHIA - CONTINUOUS

A mid-to-up-scale suburban shopping mall, packed with HOLIDAY SHOPPERS. We move through the scene, past IRRITATED CUSTOMERS packed in like sardines, STRESSED OUT PARENTS fighting each other over the dwindling items on shelves, BRATTY KIDS screaming and breaking things.

"It's the hap-happiest season of all..."

And at the back of the store, we find a LINE waiting to see:

THE MALL'S SANTA CLAUS

though not the typical Rent-a-Kringle you'd expect in a department store. Our Santa is a bit different; his suit older with a few more archaic touches. But mostly the difference is in his attitude. He's not... *jolly* exactly. Exudes warmth, but doesn't need to smile all the time. No "ho-ho-ho" here. A quiet, rugged power, with a cowboy's gravelly baritone. And his real name happens to be "NICK".

A slightly awkward KID sits on his lap, as a PARENT records them --

NICK
Ultimate Vampire Assassin 4 for the
Switch. Got it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KID ON NICK'S LAP
Are you gonna write that down?

NICK

Naw.

(taps his head)
Steel trap.

WE PUSH PAST HIM TO REVEAL the most imposing BODYGUARD we've ever seen, standing just behind him, watching everything. CALLUM DRIFT is a 6'4" tower of Christmas muscle. Clad in holiday themed leather and tactical gear -- worn burgundy bomber jacket, forest green combat pants, cold weather assault boots -- a fashion that can only be described as "Christmas Badass".

Cal's eyes land on a FURTIVE MAN in the back of the store. He pulls back his sleeve slightly to reveal-- a HI-TECH VAMBRACE (forearm armor) on his left arm, presses a button on it and speaks to someone--

CAL

Hey Fred?

At some covert watch-spot ELSEWHERE in the mall-- AGENT FRED, similarly dressed, responds--

AGENT FRED

Go for Fred.

CAL

We've got a 5'11" Grown-Up, male, hovering near the scented candles. Keep an eye out.

AGENT FRED

Copy, Chief. I got eyes on him.

Cal goes back into sentinel mode. His eagle eyes scan the breezeways, balconies, escalators, missing nothing -- not the TEEN PUNK taking all of the goddam candy canes, even though he's clearly only supposed to take one. Not the SHOPPERS accidentally BUMPING into each other and then getting mad rather than apologizing... Ah, the holidays...

Next in line, the MOTHER of THREE KIDS, nervously SHOVES a cookie tin at Nick--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NERVOUS MOTHER
Hi Santa. We made cookies for you.

Cal takes the box. Examines it for wires. Opens it. Sniffs the cookies inside. Satisfied, he passes it to Nick.

CAL
Chocolate chip and Snickerdoodles.

Nick does a surprise take, then turns to the accompanying CHILDREN-- and in that low growl--

NICK
Snickerdoodles. I love Snickerdoodles.
How'd ya know?

The kids beam--

SNICKERDOODLE KID 1
I made them myself.

SNICKERDOODLE KID 2
I helped.

NICK
You know, I've been meaning to talk to you two. Come here a minute--

But before they can, an OBNOXIOUS INFLUENCER guy, STEW, cuts in, making a video of himself--

STEW
What's up Stew Crew! It's Beef Stew here and I'm on a mission to give Santa what HE really wants for Christmas-- a Stew Crew t-shirt! So let's see if we can get the man to wear it--

Cal steps up--

CAL
Sir, you can't cut the line.

Stew tries to include Cal in the bit--

STEW
Ah, come on, Big Dude! No Christmas love for the Beef?

Cal stares at him-- unamused. The guy puts down his phone--

CAL
These kids have been waiting a long time.

(CONTINUED)

STEW
Look, man, it'll take 2 minutes. I just need him to put on the shirt and say "Now we beefin'!" This will totally go viral. People love this cheesy Christmas stuff.

(beat, then)
Dude, I have over three thousand followers. This will be good for him too. I'm gonna make your boy famous.

CAL
He's already pretty famous.

STEW
Don't be a dick, man. I just need him to put on the shirt for--

CAL
Sir. Perhaps I didn't make myself clear.
(intense)
You can't. Cut. The line.

Surprised by the intensity, the guy backs down-- as one clearly should. Then Cal turns to the kids, smiles--

CAL
Now I believe you kids have an appointment to get to.

The kids smile. And as they step up to Nick, Cal offers his fist for bumping.

INT. MALL - LATER

Their work complete, Cal guides Nick through the crowd, moving with the intensity of the Secret Service escorting the President.

NICK

Just what I needed. So important to get out. Talk to the kids. Recharge the battery. Best part of the job.

CAL

(sarcastic)

Yeah. Nothing like a crowded mall two days before Christmas.

NICK

You know you love it.
(trying to remember)
Where'd we go last year?

CAL

Helsinki and Cleveland.

NICK

Right... Cleveland.

As they approach the top of an escalator, a VENDOR at a hot dog cart TOSSES one to Nick--

VENDOR

Yo! Merry Christmas, Santa!

-- but Cal's fist INTERCEPTS it. Never stopping, he sniffs, hands it to the big man.

NICK

Merry Christmas, pal!
(to Cal)
Tell me you're not gonna miss this.

They step onto the escalator, passing a very agitated MOTHER, going the other direction, on her phone--

INTENSE MOTHER

...if they sold those American Girl beach pajamas out from under me, I will bash someone's skull.

Then--

CAL

I'm not gonna miss this.

Cal speaks into his vambrace--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL

Approaching ground floor. Let's heat up
 Ice Breaker. Freddy, secondary array, 180
 degree spread. Go.

FRED (OVER RADIO)

Copy that.

Cal looks up at the balconies above, the floor below,
 clocking his TEAM--

-- as they EMERGE from various hiding places. A group of
 similarly dressed COMMANDOS, discretely keeping watch over
 Nick and Cal. Except... from this distance and perspective,
 it's hard to tell whether they're far away... or just really
small.

Cut in CLOSE-- where FRED, a three-foot tall, highly-muscular
 agent STEPS OUT from behind a planter-- then KICKS a button
 on his boot-- and instantly GROWS to his natural 6'2" size!

TWO OTHER AGENTS, at different posts, do the same-- and they
 all stealthily FAN OUT, moving discretely through the crowd
 to their new positions-- then hit their DIMINUTION BUTTONS to
 SHRINK BACK DOWN TO THEIR 3' SIZES to hide.

INT. SERVICE TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

As Cal escorts Nick through a service tunnel--

NICK

I should have worn my other boots.

Over Cal's radio--

AGENT (OVER RADIO)

Ice Breaker in position and ready to roll.

CAL

Here we come.

He OPENS the door into--

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Mostly empty. Where NICK'S MOTORCADE awaits-- three WHITE
 SUBURBANS. The kind of convoy that might move a foreign
 dignitary-- except all snow white. AGENT GINEVRA stands by
 the open door of the center car--

NICK

The other boots have better arch
 support... Thanks, Ginevra.

AGENT GINEVRA

Sure thing, Red.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nick climbs in, Cal right behind him.

INT. ICEBREAKER - CONTINUOUS

As they settle in, Cal asks the DRIVER--

CAL
You got the package?

DRIVER
Got it, Chief.

The Driver pats a HUGE BLACK GARBAGE BAG, stuffed full, on the seat next to him. Cal nods.

CAL
Let's roll.

EXT. MALL - MOMENTS LATER

The Ice Breaker motorcade emerges from the garage and TAKES OFF, across town.

EXT./INT. ICEBREAKER - CONTINUOUS

As the motorcade traverses the city, every light "magically" turns GREEN for them, then immediately changes to RED once they pass.

Cal stares out the windows, always on watch.

NICK
It won't be the same without you, Cal.

CAL
It will be exactly the same without me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nick smirks.

CAL

Garcia has been preparing for this for decades. You couldn't ask for a better replacement.

NICK

I didn't ask for a replacement.

Now Cal turns to him, warm but earnest--

CAL

The time has come, Nick.

Nick seems to grudgingly accept this-- at least for now--

NICK

It won't be the same.

Cal half-smiles, then goes back to his vigilance.

NICK

You stubborn pain in the neck.

Cal has to laugh-- these guys have a real bond.

EXT. MCGUIRE AIR FORCE BASE - NEW JERSEY - CONTINUOUS

The East Coast's USAF Air Mobility Command. The Icebreaker is waved through the base to arrive at --

A TOP-SECRET HANGAR

The Icebreaker pulls up and parks next to twin F22 RAPTOR FIGHTER JETS! As Cal and Nick exit, the base's GENERAL steps up to greet them.

NICK

General.

USAF GENERAL

Red. Good to see ya. Successful excursion?

NICK

The mall at Christmas time... It's like oxygen for me.

Before the General can respond, they're cut off by the POWERFUL BASSO BUGLES of some unseen creatures. Our crew moves into the hangar to find--

NICK'S SLEIGH -- enormous, metal, sleek and laden with HI-TECH GEAR; somehow appearing both modern and timeless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But the biggest surprise is the REINDEER TEAM. Not of the cute, holiday card variety, ours are the biggest, baddest BATTLE REINDEER we've ever seen. Descended from the GIGANTIC CERYNEIAN HINDS from Greek mythology, Nick's sleigh pullers are HULKING, LEGENDARY CREATURES, five times larger than a bull or moose, with ENORMOUS GOLDEN ANTLERS and FANTASTICAL POWERS. And there are EIGHT of them.

NICK
Afternoon, girls.

Suddenly, they start reacting to something behind him, snorting and stamping.

NICK
What are you all so excited about?

Nick sees that they're responding to-- Cal! Nick grins--

NICK
Of course. Your boyfriend's here.

As Cal walks up toting the garbage bag, their excitement builds. They bellow. Stomp. Snort. ONE of them dips her head and affectionately NUZZLES into Cal's chest, nearly knocking him over--

CAL
Whoa, hey! Okay, okay--

The reindeer are zeroed in on the BAG gripped in Cal's hand.

CAL
Oh, you wanna know what's in here? Is this what's got your interest...?

He opens the bag, revealing it's filled with doughy PRETZLES -- hundreds of them -- the reindeer's favorite snack! They bray excitedly seeing them.

CAL
Okay, now. One at a time!

He starts TOSSING pretzels to the reindeer, who snatch them out of the air and gobble them down like they're peanuts.

Agent Fred approaches--

FRED
They just love those things.

CAL
Every time we come to Philly.
(then)
Run the sweep and meet us back at base?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRED
You got it, Chief.

Just then, Nick calls from atop the sleigh--

NICK
Cal! Come on, man! Clock's tickin'!

AND IN A SERIES OF SHOTS, WE SEE:

-- The F22 Raptors fire up their engines. *FWOOM! FWOOM!*

-- A military AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TECH announces--

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER
Red One, you are clear for take-off.

EXT. NICK'S SLEIGH - CONTINUOUS

On The Sleigh, Nick watches as the Raptors ROAR down the runway and TAKE OFF into the sky. Once they're clear--

NICK
All right, ladies. Let's go home.

And with a mighty EFFORT, they start PULLING the massive chariot down the runway-- a strip of which is covered in snow for the Sleigh-- faster, faster-- building to a GALLOP--

Their ANTLERS and HOOVES START TO BLAZE WITH GOLDEN LIGHT-- and as they approach the end of the runway, LAUNCH into the sky after the jets!

EXT. SKY OVER NEW JERSEY COAST - MOMENTS LATER

AERIAL POV: from below and behind the twin Raptors, roaring side-by-side through the air, only empty sky between them...

...until we BOOM UP TO REVEAL, like an optical illusion, Nick's sleigh and reindeer right there, flying in formation between the escorts -- their presence, by some combination of magic and technology, CONCEALED from below.

This is what it's like to fly with Nick: the reindeer raging through the clouds with loud, charging, snorting POWER! And once they reach international waters --

NICK
Thanks for the escort, fellas. See you next year!
(to his team, in Greek)
KAVALAME!!

The reindeer PUNCH IT! The Sleigh BLASTS away with such force, the Raptors WOBBLE in its wake, left in the dust--

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CONTINUED:

RAPTOR PILOT

Whoa--!

THE SLEIGH

STREAKS across the sky at hypersonic speeds, crossing the globe in a blink. But as it reaches the Arctic Circle... PULL BACK to reveal THE INVISIBLE PHYSICS OF THEIR PASSAGE -- where we actually see the SEISMIC WAVES coming off the sleigh and DESCEND with the waves to the surface below, where they trip SEISMOMETERS on icy islands...

And in a DIZZYING VFX SHOT, we follow all this digital data as it races through a maze of fiber optic cables-- to that chip that we saw Jack placing in the opening.

CUT TO:

AN APARTMENT IN JERSEY--

A hugely elaborate super-computer RIG, in a darkened room. Hacker-ish and modified for power. A snarl of wires, monitors and endless gak.

And no surprise-- the guy monitoring all of this-- *is Jack*. But at the moment, he's kicked back in his chair, shoveling a box full of Lo mein into his mouth with chopsticks, watching--

--the lead-up to a boxing match. Fighters being introduced. He picks up a nearby newspaper and checks the line-- "**Fort - 500 vs Moseley +400. Total: 3.5 Rounds. Over 5 (-280) Under 5 (+300)**"

Then he grabs his phone, places a call--

JACK

Randall, it's Jack. The money line is still Moseley at plus four hundred? Okay, put me down for fifty dimes on Moseley.

(listens)

I'll have the money. Also the Lions getting three and half for another fifty.

(beat)

Yes, really. I gotta feeling.

(another beat)

I said, I'll have it!

When suddenly-- ALERTS start going off on every one of the computers-- *seismic data from the Arctic*. Jack turns sharply--

JACK

I gotta go.

BACK WITH - CAL AND NICK

skimming high over the endless ice at the top of the world. The landscape is beautiful, but desolate, stunning ice formations *lit like neon fire by the Aurora Borealis.*

The Sleigh SLOWS CONSIDERABLY, CIRCLING over a small CLUSTER OF CLOUDS thousands of feet in the air.

NICK
Home, sweet home.

A small HATCH in the dashboard OPENS, revealing a large mechanical LEVER-- which he PULLS.

And instantly, we hear the RUMBLE of ENORMOUS GEARS TURNING... then watch as the clouds beneath them slowly IRIS APART, revealing they are, in fact, the ENTRY HATCH at the top of a GIGANTIC INVISIBLE DOME.

The Sleigh DIVES DOWN through the opening.

INT. JERSEY APARTMENT - SAME TIME

ON THE SUPER-COMPUTER-- as the seismic activity STOPS DEAD in the heart of the Arctic. COORDINATES blink a location.

Jack hits a button on his keyboard and auto-dials a number on the Dark Web. A MENACING, DIGITALLY-ENCRYPTED VOICE answers--

DIGITAL VOICE (O.S.)

Go ahead.

JACK

I got it. I don't know what the hell it is-- but I got it.

DIGITAL VOICE (O.S.)

Send the coordinates.

JACK

Yeah. Why don't you send me something first.

DIGITAL VOICE (O.S.)

Wiring the first half now, the rest when the data is verified.

On one of the monitors-- "TRANSACTION-CONFIRMED". Jack pumps his fist-- he got paid.

JACK

Pleasure doing business.

And as he disconnects--

JACK

Yes!

He glances over at a laptop-- *the boxing match*.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And Moseley is not getting up!!! Fort knocks out Moseley in the 2nd!

JACK

No!

Jack just made and then lost a large sum of money-- within about 5 seconds.

ECU-- A glass. Then ice. Then-- a stiff pour. This man's sorrows are about to drown.

EXT. NICK'S SLEIGH - TWILIGHT

as it flies over the NORTH POLE and we establish the JAW-DROPPING SIZE and SPECTACLE of the Capitol of Christmas!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A MASSIVE CRYSTALLINE MEGA-CITY, GLOWING with the MAGIC OF THE NORTHERN LIGHTS.

As the Sleigh GLIDES for the center of town, we get glimpses of the North Pole's WONDROUS SIGHTS and MAGICAL DENIZENS.

Over the colorful DYE POOLS, busy with *ICEKIND* (our Arctic spin on elves, brownies and faeries) churning out ribbons, bows and wrapping paper in every color imaginable...

Over the BLACKSMITH QUARTER, populated by hard-working and hard-playing OGRES working their forges.

We get quick GLIMPSES of other "workshop" spaces-- huge, highly specialized and powered by North Pole magic-technology to build bicycles, dolls, electronics, you name it.

And all of these spaces are connected by a fantastically complex system of chutes and conveyors that move "product" through the streets, usually with a stop at--

THE WRAPPING QUARTER-- approximately the size of a football stadium-- where the world's gifts are boxed, wrapped and decorated-- then MAGICALLY SHRUNK to miniature size-- before again being conveyed away, presumably to "Shipping".

Back with THE SLEIGH, as it arrives at the glittering spire at the heart of the city --

THE PALACE OF THE NORTH

-- Nick's regal home. The residence and central command of all North Pole operations. Like the White House, this is where he lives and works-- along with many other senior HELPERS, including Cal.

DROP DOWN TO-- A PLAZA, just in front of The Palace, where we find a quaint little cabin-- *Nick's "original" home*. The cabin is enclosed by a tasteful museum-like gate. For this is where it all started. This entire city has GROWN up around this simple, historic, sacred site.

The Sleigh SETS DOWN on a long bridge-- the Reindeer's "runway"-- as a huge hangar door SLIDES open in the side of the Palace, leading to--

INT. MAIN DECK - PALACE - SAME

Mission Control meets Sleigh Hangar. The nerve center of this massive operation, teeming with activity. Overhanging everything, a large clock labeled "**T minus**" counts down the time til launch-- "28:32:11" then "28:32:10"...

Stepping off, Nick hands the reins to the REINDEER HANDLER.

NICK
Where's the Missus?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REINDEER HANDLER
She was double-checking deliverables--

THE MISSUS (O.S.)
I'm right here!

Cal and Nick turn to see MRS. CLAUS working a MASSIVE CRANE LOADER. Strong work, stronger woman. And nothing old lady-ish about her. She might be several hundred years old but, like Nick, appears mid-60s. Bright eyes, indomitable good spirit -- but with the physical presence of an Olympic skier.

THE MISSUS
Down in a minute!

Just then, AGENT GARCIA, Interior Captain for the North Pole's E.L.F. SECURITY FORCE-- and also a bi-pedal, talking Polar Bear-- steps up to Cal.

AGENT GARCIA
Welcome back, Chief.

CAL
Garcia. What'd I miss?

AGENT GARCIA
Nothin'. Everybody's working. The updated routing is on your desk, if you want to take a look. They're re-thinking South America again...

CAL
I'll go talk to them.

He turns to Nick, who now has his arms wrapped around Mrs. Claus's waist, in a surprisingly flirtatious bit of PDA-- this appears to be a passionate couple.

CAL
Hate to interrupt. Going to check in with Routing and Logistics. Good for 8 o'clock?

NICK
We'll get after it.

THE MISSUS
Thanks, Cal.

Nick watches Cal as he walks off, and we DISSOLVE TO:

INSERT-- A RESIGNATION LETTER

**"Effective December 26th -- In accordance with
the bylaws of the Winter Codex of 782, I,
Callum Drift, resign my position as Commander
of the North Pole's E.L.F. Security Force."**

And at the bottom of the page, a pen ENTERS frame...
hesitates... then signs-- "**Callum Drift.**"

OMITTED

INT. PALACE GYM - NIGHT

Nick's private gym. A stunning, modernist space. Part Zen mediation room, part Iron Paradise™. A lot of gear. Nick does PUSH-UPS, as Mrs. Claus times him with a stopwatch--

THE MISSUS
499. And... five hundred. In two minutes.
Not bad.

NICK
Just getting warmed up.

THE MISSUS
By the way, I got a call from Joey in Sports Memorabilia. He says they're a little behind on football jerseys, but he thinks we'll be ok.

NICK
How many more do we need?

THE MISSUS
About a hundred and thirty six thousand.

NICK
Yeah, we'll be fine.

THE MISSUS
You never worry, do you?

NICK
What do I have to worry about? I've got you. I'm the luckiest guy in town.

THE MISSUS
Well. You're right about that.

He laughs.

NICK
I was thinking, this year, on the day after, let's just stay home, order in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE MISSUS
Maybe a little Scrabble?

NICK
Mm. Sounds good to me.

Cal enters and hesitates near the door--

THE MISSUS
Alright, I'm gonna run the simulation
model for Belgium and Holland again, just
to be safe.

(to Cal)
Hop in there, Callum. Get him ready. It's
almost showtime.

CAL
Yes, Ma'am. Will do.

As she heads past Cal, she notices the envelope in his hand--
the letter. She looks him in the eye, emotional-- and puts a
hand to his face, with a soft smile-- then leaves.

Cal moves to Nick, who's hydrating on the bench-- hands him
the envelope. A meaningful beat passes between them, then
Nick takes the envelope-- and puts it off to the side.

NICK
Spot me.

Nick readies for shoulder presses as Cal moves behind the
bench.

NICK
Tell me why.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

With a powerful effort and Cal's assist, he takes the weight; Cal watches carefully, as Nick starts lifting--

CAL
Time for a change, Nick. Like I told you.

NICK
Yeah, I heard you. But *why*? I'll respect your decision, but you need to tell me why you're doing this.
(re: the weight)
Let's go heavy.

Cal guides the barbell back to the rack, Nick rises.

CAL
Looking strong.

As Cal adds weight--

NICK
We work for the kids, Cal. We do it for them. And I know you love that. You live for that. So what's going on here?

CAL
I love the kids. Of course I do. It's the grownups that are killin' me.

This lands with Nick-- hadn't quite anticipated that.

NICK
Go on.

CAL
The list.

NICK
What about the list?

CAL
These last few years... each of the NL Stratum are setting records on a monthly basis. In total, we're up almost 22%, year over year.

NICK
Yes. I'm aware. What are you getting at, Cal?

CAL
You gonna make me say it? For the first time ever... there are more people on the Naughty List than not.
(searches for the words)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CAL (CONT'D)

And it's like they don't even care.

Nick takes this in.

CAL

You say it all the time-- "We choose everyday who we want to be. With big decisions and little ones. And every one of them matters." But I look around... and they act like *none of it* matters. So much bad behavior, everywhere you look. And I just can't remember anymore...

(hard to say)

...why we're even doing it.

Nick considers, then --

NICK

If nothing matters to them, then it seems to me they need us now more than ever.

Cal looks at his old friend, gives a sad, sweet smile.

CAL

That's why there's only one you. The world needs you, Nick.

(then)

And nobody with my... *doubts*, should be so close to you. You need someone younger. A 300-year-old guy in his prime who wants to change things --

NICK

But that's not our job, Cal.

(beat)

Our job is not to change people. People change *themselves*. We just show them that we have faith in them. *All of them*. Because we know who they really are, deep down.

(meets his eyes)

We know that somewhere inside of every lost grown-up *is the child that they once were*. Our gift is that we can see it, even when they can't.

He lets that hang for a second--

NICK

We work for the kids, Cal. Even when they're not kids anymore.

CAL

It's just getting harder and harder to see it. For me. And that's *why*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Nick appraises him for a moment-- can see that he's not budging. Not right now anyway. So Nick smiles at him, and grabs a tray---

NICK
Then have a cookie.

CAL
The answer to everything.

NICK
Gotta carb up.

NICK (CONT'D) You know that I burn--	CAL (heard it before) --burn over 430 million calories on Christmas Eve. Yes. I know.
---	---

Nick laughs.

NICK
One last ride, huh?

CAL
One last ride.

EXT. ARCTIC WASTELANDS - NIGHT

Lashing blizzards and jagged ice as far as the eye can see. Then, through the winterscape, FIND something else--

A LINE of MERCENARIES moving through the squall. Dressed in snow camo, they navigate the icy crevasses and razor-sharp frost formations. The crew is fighting their way through icy hell when suddenly --BUMP!-- the lead MERC SCOUT BUMPS up against an INVISIBLE WALL.

SCOUT
HERE!

The others race forward. And from among them, ONE comes forward and pulls down the hood of her parka--

--with steely blue eyes as cold as the weather and jet black hair, *this is their boss*. For now, we'll call her "BLUE".

BLUE
Get to it, Lads.

Pulling gear from their sleds, they begin building an ADVANCED PLASMA CUTTING TORCH. Like safe crackers cutting through a vault, they focus the nozzle against the invisible dome and fire it up -- **FSSSTT!!**

Instantly, the invisible wall begins to GLOW RED. BUBBLE and MELT, as they begin to BORE their way through...

EXT. MAIN PLAZA - NORTH POLE - LATE NIGHT

The city is sleepier now, but never sleeping-- various DENIZENS on their way home for the day, a FEW on the night shift, a handful of ICE SKATERS getting in a few laps...

Returning from a walk thru the city that has been his home for hundreds of years, Cal breathes it in, a bit sentimental. A few young KIDS approach and a big smile crosses his face--

KIDS
Commander Drift!/Cal!

CAL
What are you all doing out on the town?
Where's the party?

KID
Will you actualize something for us?

KID 2
Kelan, he's not allowed to do it, just for fun...

KIDS
Please?/Just once?

CAL
Well, it's true that usually I'm not supposed to. But tonight... is a little different.

KID 3
Why is tonight different?

Cal considers-- for him, tonight is monumental-- but says--

CAL
Because it's almost Christmas!

And with that, he aims his vambrace at-- a string of decorative, plastic Red Christmas Cardinals-- an emitter RISES from the surface of the vambrace and FIRES OFF a BEAM OF BOREAL ENERGY that TRANSFORMS the decorations into-- *actual birds!* Which FLY OFF into the night, shining exquisitely. Beautiful.

The kids celebrate excitedly. Cal grins-- he loves doing that. As they run off, he approaches the railing around the ORIGINAL WORKSHOP, set into the ground, looks down at it, then up at the giant Palace, behind it. How far they've come. A wistful look crosses his face.

Then, ten stories up, a light on the side of the building FLICKERS-- then WINKS OUT. A minor event that no one would ever notice...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...except for Cal. He clicks the communicator on his vambrace, calling it in.

CAL

Alpha check. It's Drift. Looks like a light just fried on the anterior West face, up around Mail Room 19B. Anyone up there?

An affable guy, JEFF, responds--

JEFF (O.S.)

Yeah, this is Jeff in Maintenance. You don't miss a thing, Commander. I'll check it out.

CAL

Thanks, Jeff.

Cal looks back up at the same area of the building-- *where another three lights suddenly go OUT.*

CAL

Hey, Jeff, looks like we got a few more of 'em too. What's goin' on up there?

But no response.

CAL

Jeff..?

(then)

Jeff, you copy?

No answer. The hairs start rising on the back of Cal's neck.

CAL

Who's with Red?

As he starts back toward the Palace--

CAL

Arthur? Is he still up there?

35 INTERCUT: E.L.F. AGENT ARTHUR checks a Workshop space. Empty. 35

AGENT ARTHUR (INTO RADIO)

Negative, Chief.

36 BACK TO-- Cal-- TRACK WITH HIM as he picks up his pace slightly-- 36

CAL

Gorman, are you in the residence?

INTERCUT: AGENT GOORMAN--

-- (a very tough Gnome) outside the bedroom--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT GORMAN

Yeah, Cal. He went down to the galley 20 minutes ago. Hasn't come back yet.

38 BACK TO SHOT: as Cal's footsteps start to come a little faster. Faster. Into the communicator--

CAL

Finkle?

No answer-- which is not good.

CAL

Finkle?!

Something registers on his face--

CAL

I need eyes on Red NOW!

He reaches a secure exterior ELEVATOR, which detects his vambrace and OPENS-- Cal steps inside and SLAMS a RED BUTTON-- the doors close quickly and the elevator SHOOTS UP.

INTERCUT - VARIOUS E.L.F. AGENTS

coming through doorways, checking rooms, calling it in.

E.L.F. SQUAD (VARIOUS)

Not in the study... Mail-1--negative...
Not in Routing... Great Hall-- negative.

BACK WITH CAL

The elevator OPENS onto a corridor-- and now Cal's RUNNING. People dive aside as he THUNDERS past --

E.L.F. SQUAD (VARIOUS)

...Gallery-- negative... Not in Mail D Block... Operations-- Negative.

Panic rising, Cal charges through the halls to arrive at --

THE KITCHEN

-- where he finds the refrigerator OPEN.

CAL

Nick?!

But as he angles around, he sees a bottle of milk SHATTERED on the ground-- and the back door WIDE OPEN!

CAL (INTO COMMS)

BREACH! BREACH!

Heart hammering in his chest, Cal charges --

OUTSIDE ONTO A BALCONY--

-- to find a *grappling hook*, with a zip line leading to the ground, fifteen stories below! Suddenly, the line goes SLACK--

--as a pair of INSANELY-MUSCULAR SNOWCAT VEHICLES ROAR out of the shadows, STOMP THE GAS and BURN away through the city!

With a battle cry, Cal CHARGES-- JUMPING the railing-- to a rooftop, several stories down! He LANDS like a ton of bricks and starts RUNNING-- CHASING the snowcats below!

CAL (INTO COMMS)
CODE GREEN! TWO ARMORED SNOWCATS HEADING
NORTH! PRINCIPAL ON-BOARD! FULL LOCKDOWN!

INTERCUT - E.L.F. CONTROL ROOM

The Central Command-- as AGENTS SPRING into action!

INTERCUT - GATES CLOSING, BARRIERS RISING

EXT. NORTH POLE CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The Snowcat DRIFTS WILDLY around corners, while Cal charges across the rooftops, a force of nature unto himself. He LEAPS onto a CHUTE, knocking gifts out of the way-- PARKOUR-ING across the North Pole infrastructure like an obstacle course.

But when the Snowcats reach one of the GATED PASSAGES-- they split up! Heading opposite directions, away from each other-- which one has Nick?!

CAL
They split up! I'm taking Northbound on Pine! Someone intercept Southbound and stop that thing!

Using the conveyors, Cal works his way to ground level--

-- and as the Snowcat approaches a narrow alley, Cal RIPS a decorative lamppost from the ground and HURLS it like a JAVELIN at the Snowcat's tread-- which works! The TREAD GRINDS and the vehicle FISHTAILS into a building-- WRECKED!

Cal RUNS over, through the smoke, OPENS the hatch-- only to find that *the snowcat is empty*. And through the windshield on the other side, Cal sees--

--the other Snowcat TEARING AWAY! Whoever was in this one must have escaped into the other!

Cal TAKES OFF after it, pulling something from his vest -- a TOY Hot Wheels SNOWMOBILE. He HURLS IT into the air ahead of him-- and as the toy sails through space, Cal aims his vambrace and -- ZAP! -- fires that BEAM OF ENERGY--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

--instantly, the toy's reality is ACTUATED -- and the toy snowmobile TRANSFORMS into the most REAL, BAD-ASS, MOTHER OF ALL SNOW MACHINES we've ever seen! Before it's even hit the ground, Cal LEAPS on, FIRES it up and hits the snow, GUNNING it after the Snowcat--

--which takes a sharp corner, then seems to PUNCH it!

And as Cal rounds the same corner, his eyes go WIDE-- as he sees a MASSIVE HOLE cut through the dome! With inches to spare, the Snowcat SPEEDS THROUGH.

Cal JAMS the gas and FOLLOWS into--

THE ARCTIC WASTELAND--

The nothingness we've seen in pictures. The jacked Snowcat is built for steep, icy terrain, and this cheetah takes it all at speed-- then HITS a rocket booster BLASTING away from the approaching Cal!

In hot pursuit, Cal hits a switch on his dash-- and a curious sonar-looking device EMERGES from the front of the vehicle-- Cal seems to "aim" the device, then PUSHES a button--

-- A LOW RUMBLE builds in intensity... As the Snowcat starts to get away from him... But Cal DRIVES hard... Until finally we see the source of the RUMBLE--

--Cal has triggered an AVALANCHE! The entire side of an ICE VALLEY CRUMBLING down toward the Snowcat-- Cal RACING along side--

-- and THE SNOWCAT is WIPED OUT by the avalanche! Stopped in its tracks!

Cal LEAPS forward, THROWS open the hatch to FIND --

NOTHING! *This one is empty too!* No driver. No Nick. Just a drone vehicle operated by remote.

Suddenly, a NOISE in the distance catches Cal's attention. He turns -- to see a fast-moving CARGO JET rising into the sky from the ridge behind him. As its engines BLAZE and the villain banks away from the North Pole at Mach .8, Cal stands there, mind reeling.

The unthinkable has happened.

Nick has just been kidnapped.

INT. E.L.F. CENTRAL CONTROL ROOM - LATER

Cal BURSTS through the door into the teeming DefCon 1 CHAOS. Full-on crisis mode-- *the biggest imaginable crisis.* And from the look on Cal's face, you wouldn't want to be whoever did this--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL
HOW THE #&%* DID THAT THING GET INTO OUR
AIRSPACE UNDETECTED?!

AGENT GARCIA
No idea!

CAL
Where's it going?!

AGENT BARSKOVA
We can't see it! They must be using
some kind of radar jam.

Cal PICKS UP a chair and THROWS it across the room into a wall! His team reacts-- they've never seen him like this.

Just then, Mrs. Claus comes rushing in--

THE MISSUS
Cal...

He moves to her and lays his hands on her shoulders, and with the weight of the world--

CAL
I'm gonna find him.

She nods, in shock, but she knows-- *her best man is on it.*

A giant monitor in the center of the room comes alive-- ZOE HARLOW is calling, her face filling the large screen. Powerful, badass, coolest of customers. But right now--

ZOE
What the hell just happened?!

AGENT BARSKOVA
We had a breach, Director.
(swallows)
Red has been... taken.

ZOE
What?! Where's Cal?!

Cal steps up to talk to her--

CAL
I'm right here!

ZOE
Who could have done this?!

CAL
I don't know. But you can bet your ass I'm gonna find out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ZOE
But we're 24 hours to Christmas Eve and--

Indeed the clock shows-- "T minus 24:11:32" . . . "24:11:31".

She stops herself, taking in the magnitude of the problem, then changes gears--

ZOE
Okay... Okay. Start at the beginning.

Taking the cue, Cal resets like the pro he is--

CAL
They cut a hole in the CF Dome with an atomic plasma torch. From the footprints, I'd say eight to ten of them. Human. Rolled in with two remote armored Snowcats, used them as a diversion and blasted out in a NORAD-blind cargo jet.

ZOE
Good god, Cal...

CAL
(deadly serious)
I'm gonna find him, Zoe.

ZOE
(equally serious)
We're gonna work together on this.

Cal doesn't love the implication but he contains himself.

ZOE
We were just told that someone hacked the Intercontinental Seismic Surveillance System. I don't know if it's related but if someone knew where to look, that's the only vulnerability in the cloaking.

CAL
Who?

ZOE
We don't know yet. The Trolls are scouring the web.

CAL
Name and address.

ZOE
They're working on it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CAL
Well, tell them to work faster! We
don't have time to wait for their--

On Zoe's side, someone interrupts--

AGENT (O.S.)
Director! The Trolls have a trace.

ZOE
Patch them in.

And on the big screen, another window appears, like someone joining a zoom conference-- an AGENT, who is an actual Troll. Behind him, a workroom teaming with activity-- a *Troll Farm*.

ZOE
Whadda you got?

TROLL
We traced the relays. Looks like "The Wolf".

This means something to Zoe--

ZOE
"The Wolf"...

CAL
(ready to kill)
Who is "The Wolf"?

A second TROLL leans in over the first guy's shoulder--

TROLL #2
Mercenary. Bounty Hunter. Works for the highest bidder. A ghost on the dark web.

ZOE
He's the guy who found El Chapo. He's also the guy who found people for El Chapo. FBI's been trying to recruit him for years, but he's a freelancer.
(considers)
It makes sense. He's probably the best tracker in the world.

TROLL #2
The guy's a legend.

MATCH CUT TO:

JACK-- AKA "THE WOLF"

-- the man, nay, the Legend... PASSED OUT in the empty bathtub of his apartment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Remnants of a half-eaten pizza from the night before are flopped around him, as is that empty bottle of bourbon-- *he clearly kept going*. Dirty clothes everywhere. If there was any doubt, it's now crystal clear-- *this guy's life is not in a good place*.

Jack is snoring away -- when his cellphone startles him awake. He looks at the screen. Groans. Answers.

JACK

Yeah?

RANDALL (ON PHONE)

You did not have a good night last night,
Jack.

JACK

You're tellin' me.

RANDALL (ON PHONE)

It was a stupid bet. I told you that.

JACK

If I didn't do stuff that people thought
was stupid, I wouldn't be where I am
today.

He looks around at his crappy bathroom.

JACK

Look Randall, I'll get you the money,
alright? When have I ever lied to you?

RANDALL (ON PHONE)

You lie all the time.

JACK

That's open to interpretation. I'll get it
to you--

RANDALL (ON PHONE)

Today.

JACK

Well, today might be a little--

RANDALL (ON PHONE)

Not my problem. Your bill is past due. It
already was and then last night you
doubled it. So today will be the day. Call
who you gotta call, do what you gotta
do... But the story is called-- today.
Goodbye.

The line goes dead. Jack rubs his head-- not a good start to the day. When the phone RINGS again, he answers--

(CONTINUED)

BLUE REVISED - 10/11/22
CONTINUED: (2)

29A.

JACK
What.

OLIVIA (O.S.)
Are you in town?

He realizes who he's talking to--

JACK
That depends. What do you want?

OLIVIA (O.S.)
I need you to do me a favor and go pick up
Dylan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JACK
I'm right in the middle of something important. This is not a good time for me --

INTERCUT CALL: DR. OLIVIA MORELLO, MD at the hospital; Jack in his apartment.

OLIVIA
Yeah, me either. I got two mothers-to-be with weakening contractions and labor that's not progressing. And Craig's out of town.

Jack reluctantly sits up, MOANS through the hang-over.

OLIVIA
Dylan got in trouble. I need you to pick him up and take him back to my place.

JACK
Liv --

OLIVIA
Jack. I'm stuck at work. Craig's away. Just shut up and do me a favor.

And as Jack sighs, CUT TO:

EXT. MARSHALL JUNIOR HIGH - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

DYLAN -- 12, moody -- waits on the sidewalk with the VICE PRINCIPAL, guitar case in one hand, chip on his punky shoulder. He'll be a confident, good looking kid someday... but right now he's prepubescent, awkward and not looking forward to whatever's about to happen here.

Soon, he spies Jack's car as it pulls up.

INT. JACK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jack's tried to pull himself together a little, but his SUNGLASSES and BARELY TAMED HAIR give away the hangover.

Dylan loads his guitar in back, then goes to open the passenger door; Jack yells to him through the window--

JACK
The handle's busted! You gotta really pull on it... Just give it a good--

Dylan struggles with the door as the Vice Principal watches, unimpressed with either of them. Finally Jack reaches across and OPENS it from the inside, which also doesn't seem easy.

Finally, Dylan climbs into the passenger seat. When Dylan closes the door, Jack WINCES--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK
You have any aspirin?

Dylan looks at him, confused.

DYLAN
What..? No.

JACK
Just checkin'.

INT./EXT. JACK'S CAR - DRIVING - MINUTES LATER

They're driving in silence... until Jack spies a CHURRO VENDOR on the corner.

JACK

Oh, man. That looks good. Gotta get something in my stomach before I--

He CUTS ACROSS two lanes of traffic-- horns BLARE.

JACK

(to the other drivers)

OH, SHUT UP!!

(to Dylan)

You want a churro?

DYLAN

No.

JACK

What are you talkin' about? Of course, you do... .

DYLAN

No, I don't.

Jack ROLLS down the window, calls to the vendor--

JACK

Hey man! Two please!

DYLAN

I don't want a churro.

JACK

I heard you. They're for me.

(moving on)

So...? What are they claiming you did?

DYLAN

Tampered with the school's attendance records. Which... I did.

JACK

Allegedly. Never admit that.

The vendor passes the churros through the window, Jack hands him a couple bills, then PULLS AWAY, scarfing churro--

DYLAN

The music teacher leaves his computer open during 5th period. I started ditching Science so I could practice guitar, then I'd go in and change it on the computer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK
Sure. Makes sense.

DYLAN
There's this... *girl*. In jazz band. Piper.
Alto sax. And she started to ditch with
me.

JACK
Niice.

DYLAN
We're just friends!

JACK
Okay!

DYLAN
But then Kevin--

JACK
Who's Kevin?

DYLAN
He's my best friend. At least, he *was*.

JACK
What'd he do?

DYLAN
Kevin found out and he wanted to ditch
too. And he's not even in jazz band! He
just wanted to hang out with Piper! *I was*
the one hanging out with Piper... And I'm
supposed to change his Absent to a
Present, so that *he* can hang out with
Piper? Hell, no!

JACK
Yeah, that's not gonna fly.

DYLAN
So instead I gave him three more Absents.

JACK
Uh-huh. You sent a message.

DYLAN
He got busted. Told the Vice Principal
what I was doing...
(then)
So I slashed the tires on his bike.

Dylan looks out the window-- he may feel a little guilty
about all of this. Maybe more than a little...

(CONTINUED)

DYLAN
I know. You're disappointed...

JACK
I am disappointed. If you're gonna hack into a mainframe, you gotta go in quietly through a back door. No fingerprints. But more important-- *don't tell anybody*. As soon as Kevin knows what you're up to, you're exposed. You can't trust anybody and you can't let anyone get the upper hand on you. Ever. 'Cause they'll use it.
(then)

Did the girl get collared too?

DYLAN
No. We left her out of this.

JACK
Good.

They pull up to their destination, where they find Olivia waiting outside in her scrubs. Dylan goes to open the door --

JACK
Just so we have our story straight, what are we telling your mother?

DYLAN
You just keep quiet. I'll deal with her.

Dylan struggles with the busted door for a minute before Jack reaches across and OPENS it for him--

DYLAN
(indicates the guitar)
I gotta go practice. I've got this dumb winter pageant thing tonight with jazz band.

JACK
Pageant?
(shudders at the thought)
Oof! Nightmare.

DYLAN
I know. I said it was dumb.

But when Dylan turns to get out of the car, we see his expression FALL... and we get the sense that Dylan might have been hoping Jack would come.

JACK
Well... good luck.

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CONTINUED: (3)

33A.

DYLAN
Bye.

Jack watches as Dylan heads inside; Olivia walks up, leans into the passenger window.

(CONTINUED)

JACK
I thought labor wasn't progressing?

OLIVIA
Then it did. Thank you for getting him.
(glances at the door, a
little worried)
He's going through something these
days. Acting out.

JACK
Yeah, well... At least he's not biting
people anymore.

OLIVIA
He hasn't bitten anyone since he was six.

JACK
How old is he again?

OLIVIA
He's twelve.

JACK
Right. So... I guess we nailed it then.

He's kidding but this is not funny to her. She's moved past
anger after all these years, but the disappointment is always
just beneath the surface. And he knows it.

JACK
He'll be fine. He's a good kid.

OLIVIA
He's a *great* kid. He's just having a hard
time right now.

JACK
Well, growing up is... tough.

OLIVIA
How would you know?

He looks to her-- half-kidding.

JACK
At least that's what I've been told.

She pivots back--

OLIVIA
You know, this can be a hard age for kids.

He starts to squirm a bit--

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CONTINUED: (5)

34A.

JACK
Well... you and Craig are great with this
stuff. You're doing a great job, so far.

OLIVIA
Craig is *not his father*.
(then)
You know... I could use your help.

JACK
What are you talking about? I just picked
him up! Look, I gotta get going... I have
to work.

His classic dodge. And we can see it on Olivia's face-- that
familiar disappointment.

OLIVIA
Right.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

(then)

See you later, Jack.

She pats the top of the car-- dismissed-- but Jack lingers, watching as she disappears inside the house.

EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Jack returns home, dusting off his second churro, his conversation with Olivia reverberating in his head.... And as he heads for the front door, he spots--

--a DELIVERY TRUCK parked on the street outside, a WORKER hovering near the back, not really working.

Wait, did that worker just clock him?

Jack keeps walking, cool but now alert. He tosses the rest of the churro in a trash can.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Jack climbs the stairwell to his 4th floor corridor. But as he nears his apartment, he notices two more STONE-FACED WORKERS approaching from the far end of the hall.

And then the elevator opens up behind him and two more grim WORKERS close in from the opposite direction.

JACK

(to himself)

Ooo-kay.

Jack is about to open his apartment door to escape the pincer move...when he notices SHADOWS SHIFTING beneath the frame -- *clearly more people inside his apartment.*

TIGHT ON HIS FACE-- "Here goes."

Jack pretends to fumble for his keys, and as soon as one of the approaching "workers" gets close enough, Jack WHIP-TURNS, GRABBING and SHOVING him through the apartment door --

-- where a SEMI-FUTURISTIC SPEC-OPS TEAM is laying in wait to zap him with an ACQUIESKER: a weird-ass, next-century version of a stun gun. Jack PUSHES the "Worker" into it-- ZAPPP!!--

-- suddenly, the Worker is overwhelmed by a MASSIVE SURGE of ENERGY, blindingly bright, as if GLOWING from within, *lighting up the room*-- then just as quickly, *the surge is gone.* The Worker stands absolutely still, seemingly unconscious, bows his head and offers his wrists, presumably for cuffing.

JACK

What the --?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly everyone charges Jack with Acquiescers! And we remember that while Jack might be kind of a mess, he is also the guy that Zoe described to Cal-- a serious operator.

He DUCKS one, makes two others HIT EACH OTHER, then uses a third as a human shield who gets Acquiesced... Leaving a trail of stock-still human statues in his wake. He GRABS HUMAN SHIELD by the jacket --

-- and HURLS his acquiesced body through a neighbor's door-- CRASH! -- then BOLTS inside.

His pursuers CHARGE in after, spreading out to find him.

A PAIR BURSTS into the kitchen to find the room empty-- but the door at the far end *swinging wildly back and forth!* As they barge through the door and race away on the hunt, we HOLD in the empty kitchen...then RACK FOCUS to the tiny KITCHEN WINDOW --

-- where we see FINGERTIPS outside, gripping the ledge.

EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jack DANGLES from the window sill, then FREE-CLIMBS his way to a drain pipe and SLIDES down to ground level.

Scot free, he rounds the corner--

-- and walks right into a GLOWING ACQUIESKER held at his throat by ZOE--

ZOE
Jack O'Malley?

JACK
Who's asking?

ZAAAAAPPPPPP!!! The BLINDING LIGHT overtakes him-- then he bows his head and offers his wrists-- *Acquiescent*.

HARD CUT TO:

NICK--

-- as he awakens from what must have been a forced sleep. His eyes focus and calmly assess his surroundings--

-- a dark industrial space. And more specifically, Nick himself is imprisoned in the magical equivalent of a HYPERBARIC CHAMBER. Unrestrained but locked in, seated on a folding chair.

"Blue", the commando boss, approaches the chamber. They GLARE at each other for a long beat, then--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
Well, this is unfortunate.

BLUE
No. This is what needed to be done.

NICK
I sincerely doubt that.

She PULLS something from her coat-- *a palm sized metal tablet*, ancient but immaculate. Nick tenses slightly--

BLUE
The world is a mess. You know it as well as I do. Humanity has run amok. *Because they fear nothing.*

(then)
But that's about to change. I'm going to give them something to fear. *A powerful deterrent.*

Nick just looks at her, she sounds deranged.

BLUE
I am going to do, in one night, what you have failed to do for centuries.

NICK
And what's that?

She smiles a creepy smile--

BLUE
I'm going to fix them.

She approaches the chamber and TURNS A DIAL-- the chamber ACTIVATES and immediately a visible ENERGY starts EMANATING from Nick!

NICK
What are you doing?

BLUE
Borrowing some of your energy.

And suddenly, Nick gets groggy, *as though FALLING ASLEEP.*

BLUE
Now go to sleep, Nicholas. Go to sleep.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jack is now restrained in a chair, with technology seemingly from the future. Zoe stands over him, surrounded by her team-- most of which Jack beat down moments ago and their feelings about him are clear. Zoe touches the Acquiescer to his forehead and with a more gentle --ZIP!-- Jack JERKS-- opens his eyes-- and he's back. He realizes his location and predicament; squints at Zoe--

ZOE
"The Wolf".

He's a little surprised to hear someone use the code name-- neither confirms nor denies.

ZOE
We know what you did.

JACK
Huh?

ZOE
We know what you did.

He looks genuinely baffled.

JACK
Ok. First of all-- sorry. And second-- can you be a little more specific? Honestly, you could be talking about like twelve different things.

ZOE
Who are you working for?

JACK
Once again, I don't know what you're talking about. But I work for whoever pays me.

ZOE
You have about 40 seconds to become helpful before you have a terrible accident and donate your brain to science. I will get the information one way or another. So I'm going to ask you one more time-- who hired you to find him?

JACK
Find who?!

ZOE
You know who.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK
I promise you, I don't. If I did, I would tell you. I'm not a scrupulous person. Ask anyone.

On Zoe-- it seems like he may be telling the truth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ZOE
The Intercontinental Seismic Surveillance System. Sound familiar?

Hm. He runs through the options, before settling on--

JACK
Yeah. I did that.

ZOE
Why?

JACK
It was a weird job. Somebody looking for somebody who's conducting tests on some kind of weapons system in the Arctic. I found the location and walked away.

ZOE
For who?

JACK
I told you, I don't know! All communication was encrypted and untraceable. Which is how it's supposed to be, so that if somebody like, say, you comes around, I don't have answers. And I don't ask questions. I just find people that other people can't find. And I'm very, very good at it.

She considers this...

ZOE
You really don't know what you did, do you?

JACK
I guess not. I can tell that you're very upset about it though.

As much as she wants to punch him... another thought is crossing her mind... To her team--

ZOE
Box him up. He's coming with us.

JACK
"Box me up"?

INT. MORA BLACK OPS FIELD SITE - DAY

A large warehouse/Black Ops sight, which has been turned into a temporary Command Post for Zoe and her TEAM. One corner of the global response to the biggest mythological crisis in over a century.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At one end, a few converted cargo containers are arranged in a U-shape. From the outside, they look exactly like the giant boxes you might see stacked on the deck of a cargo liner-- but here in this clandestine location, each has an open side, revealing a portable high-tech work space--

--a mobile conference room/command post, a lab of some kind, a mobile storage bay for a ton of unrecognizable equipment.

A black SPRINTER VAN PULLS in through a bay door, followed by that moving truck that was parked outside Jack's building. Zoe emerges from the back of the van, as a pair of agents DOLLIES a large REFRIGERATOR CRATE down the back ramp of the truck. From inside the box, we HEAR--

JACK (IN BOX)
Is this really necessary?

As the agents roughly SET DOWN the crate--

JACK (IN BOX)
Ow!

Zoe PUSHES A BUTTON on a handheld device-- the sides of the box FALL, revealing Jack still strapped to that chair. With another PUSH of a button, Zoe RELEASES him from his futuristic restraints. He takes in the scene--

JACK
Nice place. How long you been here?

ZOE
Come with me.

Glancing at the Agents surrounding him and seeing no other choice-- he does. On an open Pelican case, spewing cable, Jack spots the blocky lettering--

JACK
"M-O-R-A" "..." ?

ZOE
MORA.
(pronounced "More'a")
The Mythological Oversight and Restoration Authority.

JACK
Come again?

ZOE
We're the multilateral international organization responsible for securing and protecting the Mythological world.

JACK
The "*mythological world*".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ZOE

Yes.

JACK

Oooo-kay. So like... Big Foot, the Loch Ness Monster... that kind of thing?

ZOE

That kind of thing.

Jack CRACKS UP, as she leads him around the back of the containers--

JACK

(thru laughter)

So... things *that don't exit*. You're responsible for them. Got it--

--but his laughter STOPS ABRUPTLY when he SEES-- a HUGE GHOULISH BLACK STALLION REAR UP on its hind legs, WHINNYING aggressively, FLAMES BLASTING from its nostrils--

JACK

OHMYGOD!

--the Horse COMES DOWN HARD, as 3 HANDLERS in FLAME RETARDANT UNIFORMS regain control of their long leads-- then start to LEAD the Horse away, right past Jack and Zoe.

Jack is shell shocked. Enough so that it takes him a second to realize that trailing the horse is-- A TALL FIGURE in a long black coat-- with no head. He's also being led away in handcuffs by a MORA AGENT-- and trailing *him*, yet another AGENT carries a large lucite box containing a FLAMING JACK-O'-LANTERN--

--Jack takes a step back as they pass-- and the Pumpkin TURNS in the box, "watching" Jack-- creepy.

The passing AGENT addresses Zoe--

AGENT

If he knows anything, he's not talking.

ZOE

Alright-- horse back to The Pen, body back to Area 32. And get the pumpkin back in the cryo-vault STAT.

AGENT

Yes, Director.

They walk away, leaving Jack with his jaw on the floor.

ZOE

Have a seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She gestures to a familiar interrogation room set-up-- simple table, couple of opposing chairs.

JACK
WHAT. THE HELL. WAS THAT.

ZOE
The Horseman. We're questioning all the usual suspects.

JACK
The HEADLESS HORSEMAN?!

ZOE
Have a seat, Jack.

JACK
What did that taser thing do to my head?!

ZOE
It's not a taser, it's an Acquiescer. Just take a deep breath and have a seat.

Trying to regain his composure, he does, as Zoe PACES.

ZOE
The Horseman is actually the perfect analogy. There's what you think you know. And then there's what actually is. MORA keeps those things-- *separate*. For the same reason we keep *his body* and *his head* in different zip codes-- *it's just safer that way*.

He stares at her blankly, then--

JACK
What am I doing here?

She considers for one last beat, then--

ZOE
Last night, at roughly 11pm NPST, Red One, also known as Saint Nicholas of Myra, was abducted from the North Pole Complex.

Zoe reaches into her pocket and pulls-- *the chip that Jack attached to that cable in the opening.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ZOE

The data that you retrieved from the I-triple-S appears to have been used to pinpoint the location of the North Pole, which has been secure and classified for several hundred years.

Jack takes this in. He opens his mouth to speak, but for the first time-- he can't.

ZOE

Use your words.

Then--

JACK

Are you saying that... *Santa Claus* has been kidnapped?

She just stares at him-- yes.

JACK

And you think I had something to do with that?

Again-- yes. Jack considers all of this-- *where to start?*

JACK

Alright, first of all, the location of the North Pole is not "classified"--

ZOE

The Complex is not actually located at the geographic North Pole. That's a cover for security purposes.

JACK

So the actual North Pole is--

ZOE

(getting impatient)
Is the place you found yesterday. Yes. And whoever you were working for is the person who did this. So what I need to find out-- *is who that is.*

Which is when they hear an approaching voice--

CAL (O.S.)

Where is he?!

ZOE

Your day is about to get worse.

And on cue, Cal comes CHARGING around the corner. He regards Jack, steely cold--

(CONTINUED)

CAL
This is him?

ZOE
Jack "The Wolf" O'Malley. Meet Callum Drift, Commander of the E.L.F.

JACK
"The E.L.F."?

Jack rises, takes in Cal-- the size, the uniform, *the rage in his eyes.*

And Cal looks at Jack like he's looking at... *the guy who kidnapped Santa Claus.*

ZOE
It turns out that Jack here didn't know what he was doing. Somebody hired him to find the complex and, incredibly, he did.

Cal takes a deep breath, breathing fire--

CAL
Who.

ZOE
He doesn't know.

JACK
I don't know.

Cal considers a moment, then--

CAL
Yes, he does.

JACK
I don't.

ZOE
It was all anonymous, encrypted
communication through dark channels. We
checked his computer.

JACK
You did? ZOE
Yes, we did.

CAL
They always know something. Sometimes you
just have to shake it out.

JACK
I'm not gonna like you. I can tell. Of
everybody here, I like you the least.

Cal glares at him, then--

CAL
Garcia!

Garcia (the Polar Bear E.L.F. Agent) comes around the corner--
equally pissed. Jack's takes a step back at the sight of him--

AGENT GARCIA
Yeah, Chief?

--and his eyes go wide-- *the bear talks!*

JACK
WHAT THE--

Garcia moves closer-- *just enormous.*

CAL
This guy's not cooperating.

AGENT GARCIA
Should we do the thing?

CAL
I'm afraid we may have to.

JACK
What *thing?*

ZOE
Cal, let's talk about this for a minute.

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CONTINUED: (7)

CAL

There's nothing to talk about. This guy's on the list. You can't believe anything he says.

JACK

What “list”?!

CAL
You know goddam well what list.

JACK
I'm not on any watch-list--
(dawns on him)
Wait, do you mean...?

CAL
Yeah. *That one*. You're on it. I checked.
NL-4.

Garcia pipes up, disgusted--

AGENT GARCIA
You're telling me this clown is a Level 4
Naughty Lister?

JACK
"A Level 4 Naughty Lister"?

Cal and Garcia start to move on Jack-- who STEPS BACK--

JACK
Ok, *what are we doing here?!*

ZOE
CAL!

She moves closer to speak more confidentially-- lays a gentle hand on his chest--

ZOE
I know this is killing you. *Me too*. But you have to trust me. Dismembering this shitbag is not going to help. It would feel good, but it won't help.

JACK
I'm right here!

ZOE
Shut up! CAL
Shut up.

Cal considers-- she is his boss and he does trust her.

CAL
So what are you thinking?

She gives him a look-- and suddenly, he can see what she's thinking--

CAL
No--

ZOE
We're gonna put him to work.

JACK
Come again?!

ZOE
You said you work for whoever pays you.
Well, today you work for me.

CAL
We don't need this guy, Zoe.

ZOE
I don't like it either. But he's the best
tracker in the world, Cal. He found him
once. Maybe he can do it again.

CAL
He's not telling us what he knows.

ZOE
He *is* telling us what he knows, he just
doesn't know who hired him.

Then--

JACK
Well, hold on-- how much are we talking
about here?

And suddenly all eyes are on him. Without being told, Garcia
SPRINGS into action and GRABS Jack from behind in a Bear Hug!
Cal shakes his head-- "grown-ups". Zoe approaches, menacing--

ZOE
Is there something you're not telling me,
Jack?

Garcia puts a SQUEEZE on him-- he can barely breathe.

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CONTINUED: (10)

46A.

JACK
I don't know who it is! But I can figure out where they are! Or where they *were* last night....

Cal and Zoe exchange looks-- then Cal signals to Garcia to release Jack, who GASPS for air--

JACK
It's all anonymous but I need insurance.
In case of *billing issues*. I trojan horse a digital tracking bug into their VPN. It pings the nearest cell tower.

ZOE
You mean--

JACK
I can track the device.

CAL
Then I suggest you do it.

Jack thinks about this. Then, after a long beat--

(CONTINUED)

JACK
Can we go back to the "paying me" part,
for a minute?

CAL
See?

Zoe shakes her head-- *this guy*.

ZOE
I know what *they* paid you. We'll double
it.

JACK
Triple.

CAL
Garcia!

Garcia STEPS CLOSER--

ZOE
Fine. But until we find him, you work for
me.

Jack considers a beat, then--

JACK
Give me my phone.

She produces his cell phone from her pocket. Jack takes it, starts punching around. Cal and Zoe exchange looks-- *he hates this idea; she doesn't care, this is an emergency*.

JACK
Whoever it is... they're in Aruba.

CAL
Where in Aruba? ZOE
(calling out)
Get seven interdiction teams
moving to Aruba! Now!

JACK
Hold on! Anyone dealing with me will smell
coordinated teams moving in, a mile away.
One whiff and they're in the wind. Then
we're nowhere.

A beat, then--

JACK
I'll go myself.

CAL
'The hell you will.'

They GLARE at each other-- standoff. Then--

(CONTINUED)

ZOE
You'll go together.

JACK
I work alone.

CAL
You used to.

JACK
I'm not rolling into Aruba undercover *with* a giant elf.

CAL
It's E-L-F.

Interrupting--

CAL
We can't trust this guy, Director.

ZOE
That's why you're holding the leash. And *this--*

She produces something from a case and THROWS it at Jack's leg-- before he can react, it WRAPS around his ankle, TIGHTENS and ILLUMINATES, like a high-tech slap bracelet/ankle monitor.

ZOE
-- is how I can find you anywhere on Earth. So don't get any ideas. *You're mine until we find him.* We have less than 24 hours.

(then)
Go.

CUT TO:

INT. BLUE'S LAIR

Elsewhere in this darkened labyrinth, Blue watches as her Mercs tend to a large, industrial machine of some kind. The LEAD MERC approaches--

LEAD MERC
Ready for a test.

Blue OPENS a nearby pelican case, REVEALING-- a small glass globe. Is it a Christmas ornament? No... A snow globe. But not of the kitschy, gift shop variety. This one feels like a mythological artifact.

And Blue treats it as such, using a pair of TONGS so as not to make direct contact, she delicately PULLS it from the case and places it in a central COMPARTMENT in the machine.

BACK WITH NICK--

-- fast asleep in his chamber, EMANATING that pulsing energy.

BACK AT THE MACHINE--

The apparatus LIGHTS UP and after a beat, RINGS-- operation complete. A hatch opens, REVEALING-- an identical *snow globe*.

MACHINIST MERC
Duplication complete!

Blue smiles, pleased, then--

BLUE
Now, let's see if it works.

TECH MERC
Who do you have in mind, mum?

She pulls that metal TABLET--

BLUE
We'll start with the first name on the list.

In close, SEE a name magically RISE on the tablet, in embossed lettering-- "Aaron Able".

EXT. JERSEY CITY TOY STORE - DAY

Last minute SHOPPERS hustle up and down the sidewalk, in front of-- a toy store. Busiest week of the year.

Hold for a beat. When suddenly, the moving TRUCK that had been parked in front of Jack's building SCREECHES to a stop in front of the store. The back gate OPENS, Cal and Jack POP out. Cal walks inside, in a hurry--

INT. JERSEY CITY TOY STORE - CONTINUOUS

Perplexed, Jack follows after Cal, who grabs things off the shelves -- a MONOPOLY game, a set of JACKS, a SLINKY, a pack of DURACELL BATTERIES, a pair of mini-Rock'em Sock'em Robots, -- but not like they're toys. Like he's an action hero preparing for war.

JACK
We doing some last minute Christmas shopping?

CAL
We're gearing up.

He points to the Hot Wheels section--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL
Grab one of those cars. Something practical.

JACK
For what?

CAL
(dumb question)
For us.

Jack looks confused but grabs a Hot Wheels off the shelf, then follows Cal into--

THE STOCKROOM

Piles of toys, cubbies for the employees... Cal strides over to a SHABBY CUSTODIAL CLOSET. He puts an E.L.F. KEY into the lock and the doorframe ACTIVATES with MAGICAL ENERGY.

JACK
Whoa.

CAL
Clear. Let's go.

He opens the door revealing-- a mundane supply closet. Mops and buckets, etc...

Cal steps inside and DISAPPEARS. Stunned, Jack instinctively steps back-- until CAL'S HUGE HAND REAPPEARS OUT OF THIN AIR and PULLS him through the illusion of the crappy closet, into:

INT. A TOY STORE IN ARUBA!

They step out of a different supply closet, into a totally different store-- filled with the same toys, but now with DUTCH NAMES. Cal marches out, as Jack realizes--

JACK
Wait... where... what--

EXT. ARUBA TOY STORE - CONTINUOUS

Cal and Jack step out into the Caribbean island paradise. Jack's mind is blown--

JACK
What the... what happened there?!

CAL
Toy stores.

JACK
"Toy stores" what? They're magic?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL
(another dumb question)
No.
(then)
The supply closets are the portal stations
for the North Pole Field Network Transit
System.

He heads down the sidewalks, Jack follows.

DOWN THE BLOCK--

They round a corner into an alley--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAL
Car?

Jack hands him the Hot Wheels-- a shiny red CORVETTE.

CAL
I said *practical*.

JACK
What, like a minivan? Who wants a
"practical" Hot Wheels? Also, what
difference does it make?

CAL
I gave you a directive.

JACK
(laughs)
A "directive"? Is *that* what you think's
happening here?

Cal sets the car on the ground--

CAL
Just saying, you'd be best to listen to
me. It's about to get real.

He points his vambrace at the Corvette, hits a button and --
SPOP! -- it magically transforms the toy into a REAL FULL-SIZE CORVETTE! Jack's mouth falls open.

JACK
How did--

CAL
I adjusted its reality.

JACK
Does that--

CAL
(cutting Jack off)
No, it doesn't work on everything. No, you
can't try it. And, no, you can't drive.
Now no more questions. Get in.

Cal hops behind the wheel. Jack takes shotgun. And -- VROOOM!
-- they BURN OFF toward the coast.

EXT. ARUBA - MINUTES LATER

And in a travelog beauty shot, the Corvette rips along the
tropical coast.

INT. CORVETTE - CONTINUOUS

As Cal drives, Jack stares at him, trying to wrap his head around all this--

JACK
So you're... the *bodyguard*... for Santa Claus.

CAL
I'm the Commander of the E.L.F.

JACK
"E.L.F." Which stands for...?

CAL
As far as you're concerned, it stands for "Extremely Large and Formidable".

JACK
And that's all you do? All year? Security for Santa?

CAL
It's a big job.

JACK
Sure. But it's *one day*, right? It's a big job *that one day*.

CAL
We work 364 days a year. Because on that "one day", we deliver presents to several billion individual domiciles, across 37 time zones. *In one night*. Without being detected by a *single human being*. We prep and rehearse every moment, every stop, down to the last chimney. So yeah, it's a lot of work.

JACK
364 days?

CAL
We have Boxing Day off.

Jack considers this--

JACK
Wouldn't it be more... *efficient* to send a few teams, divide it up a little bit?

CAL
That's not how it works.

JACK
He has to do all of it himself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL
He doesn't "have to". It's his *purpose*.
He is a singular force in the universe.

JACK
Like... a god?

CAL
More like an energy. He's the immortal,
living embodiment of Hope.

Jack considers, then--

JACK
Well, that does sound like a big job.
(then)
So bottom line, if we don't find him in
the next 24 hours-- which I'll be honest,
is gonna be... challenging-- what happens?

CAL
It initiates a Cycle of Despair that could
last several generations.

JACK
Several generations?

CAL
Are you familiar with the Dark Ages?

JACK
I mean... sort of?

CAL
He got sick once. It took 250 years for
humanity to recover.

JACK
Seriously?!

CAL
Hope is more fragile than anyone realizes.

JACK
Okay... but worst case scenario... is
there someone else who can step in this
year? Like a Vice-Santa?

CAL
Are you listening? No! There is NO ONE
else who can do what he does.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAL (CONT'D)

(deadly serious)

He knows when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And he knows that about everybody on the entire planet. He has a list the size of Rhode Island and he checks it. Twice. If you were to try to read that list once, it would take you a decade. And he does it twice. And the reason he's able to do any of it is because HE IS SANTA CLAUS. The one and only! And NOBODY else can execute his mission.

JACK

Which is... to deliver presents?

CAL

To spread cheer, asshole.

And with that, they turn down the long driveway to--

EXT. PARADIJS RESORT - ESTABLISHING

A hedonistic haven for the wealthy and wicked. As the Corvette pulls to the valet --

CAL

Open that Monopoly box.

Jack does, and Cal uses his vambrace to -- *spop!* -- change all the funny money inside into COLD HARD CASH.

JACK

I gotta get one of those.

Cal hands the VALET a thick roll of bills--

CAL

Merry Christmas. Keep it close, will ya?

As they approach they entrance, Jack notices Cal sweating in his heavy leather jacket--

JACK

Little warm in that thing?

CAL

I'll be fine.

And with that, Cal PULLS on the carabiner attached to his jacket-- and the sleeves magically disappear. Jack double-takes. Then Cal does it again-- the jacket unzips.

CAL

Let's go.

EXT. PARADIJS RESORT - POOL AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Cal and Jack step out of the hotel and take in the scene--
--the glamorous pool at a stunning beach resort for the
beautiful, rich and infamous. Skin and booze everywhere.
Decadence defined. And Jack loves everything about it--

JACK

Well, nice knowing ya. Good luck with
everything. I'm going to stay here for the
rest of my life. Maybe marry her--

CAL

Focus. We gotta find your guy.

JACK

Not a lot of fun, are you, Cal?

CAL

When I'm not trying to save the world from
eternal despair, I'm very fun. I was voted
Most Fun Caroling Captain, 183 years in a
row.

Jack takes that in--

JACK

Oh. Then I take it back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jack APPROACHES the bar-- and as the BARTENDER finishes making a Piña Colada for a WAITER to deliver, Jack quickly helps himself to it, then moves to a nearby lounge and takes a seat, getting comfortable.

JACK

Let's just enjoy the ambiance for a moment, shall we?

Cal glares at him--

CAL

I knew this was pointless.

--then moves off, scanning the guests for the perp, walking among the sunbathers, a bit of a sore thumb. *Almost everyone here looks suspicious.* He focuses on--

A shady middle-aged GUY melting on a chaise in his Speedo and shades. Classic vacationing mobster vibe.

Cal squints at the "suspect"-- *is this the guy?* When suddenly, Jack appears over his shoulder--

JACK

That's not him.

CAL

You're so sure?

JACK

Yep. He's a bad guy, but he's not the bad guy we're looking for.

(then)

Nobody doing this kind of business-- *from here--* is lying by the pool by himself in underpants, with his back to the entrance.

Cal considers this-- it does sound true.

JACK

You need me to show you how it's done?

Cal just looks at him-- so obnoxious.

JACK

Do you?

A deep breath, then--

CAL

I would suggest you give it a shot.

(CONTINUED)

Which is when Jack glances over at--
--a BIG GUY in linen pants, headed for the beach.

JACK
Let's go to the beach.

EXT. PARADIJS RESORT - BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

A gorgeous tropical paradise. The two guys move down the beach--

JACK
I see the worst in everyone, Cal. It's my gift.

Cal takes that in-- *the exact opposite of Nick.*

JACK
It's the key to my work. I can see a person's worst qualities, just by looking at them. Like that guy right there--

As he walks, he points out VARIOUS SHADY LOOKING CHARACTERS on the beach--

JACK
--is married. But not to her. Which is why he's got a tan line where his wedding ring would be. *That guy* is about to screw over *that guy*. Which is why he's laughing too loud like that. And *that guy*--

He points to a large GUY, tough in a linen shirt--

JACK
--*that guy* is interesting.

Cal takes a deep breath, annoyed by this schtick.

JACK
Why, you ask?

CAL
I didn't ask.

JACK
Well, I'll tell ya'-- his shoes. Look around. Who's wearing shoes at the beach? You, me and him. And we're all working something.

The guy arrives at a group of three SIMILARLY TOUGH GUYS.
Jack stops walking--

JACK
Ah.

CONTINUED:

CAL

"Ah" what?

JACK

He's a Karmanian Death Merc. As is that
guy, that guy and that guy. You can tell
by the tattoos on their necks.

CAL

This is all fascinating. Now how 'bout we
find the guy we're actually looking for.

JACK

He's right there.

And he points past the Death Mercs at-- a guy standing in
front of a cabana, at the far end of the beach, talking up
two bikini'd GIRLS--

TED CANNON-- ruthless power broker. Equal parts Tom Hagen and
American Psycho. Mess with this man at your own risk.

JACK

And the Karmanians are his security
detail.

He points out the Big Guy he followed, as well as A FEW
OTHERS, nearby. They're discrete, but upon closer
examination, clearly a team of badass bodyguards.

CAL

You sure?

Jack pulls his phone out of his pocket-- and enters a
combination. After a beat--

-- Ted raises his finger to the girls-- the universal sign
for "don't go anywhere"-- and PULLS his phone from his
swimsuit, doesn't recognize the number but ANSWERS--

--and through Jack's phone, we HEAR--

TED (ON PHONE)

Yeah?

Jack hangs up--

JACK

I'm sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ted hangs up -- must have been a wrong number-- then turns his attention back to the girls-- and leads them into his private cabana, out of view.

Despite himself, Cal is impressed. Then he heads straight for the cabana: Jack follows--

JACK
Whoa, whoa, whoa. What are we doing?

CAL
Going to talk to him.

JACK
We gotta go in sideways here. Did I mention these guys call themselves "Death Mercs"?

CAL
We'll be fine.

The MERCS see him coming. As Cal gets close, two more DEATH MERCS appear from nowhere, surrounding him-- 5 on 1.

DEATH MERC #1
Keep walkin'.

CAL
I need to talk to him. Now.

DEATH MERC #1
Keep. Walkin'.

CAL
I'll count to five.

DEATH MERC #1
(laughs)
Or what?

CAL
Or you might get hurt.

Jack steps up, attempting diplomacy--

JACK Gentlemen--	DEATH MERC #1 (laughs) I might get hurt.
---------------------	--

JACK
Okkaaay! Guys, I think we got off on the wrong--

CONTINUED: (3)

CAL
 (full Dirty Harry)
 Listen, shithead. It's Christmas. So in
 the Yuletide spirit, I'm going to ask
 you *one more time*--

DEATH MERC #1
 Go.

And on command, the Mercs move in for the kill. One comes up behind Cal and GRABS him--

-- as Merc #1 THROWS a huge punch--

-- but what happens next happens in a blink-- Cal KICKS A BUTTON on his ankle, triggering his DIMINUTIZER, instantly shrinking himself down to 3 FEET TALL to cleanly DUCK THE PUNCH -- which SMASHES into the Merc who'd been holding him! Cal KICKS the button again and instantly GROWS back to REGULAR SIZE to THROW the guy into the others!

And it's on! A fight like nothing we've ever seen, Cal SHRINKING and GROWING as he slips through the beats of this bizarro combat, like some kind of North Pole Martial Art, built around sudden size-shifting to disorient and outmaneuver the opponent. And importantly -- *Cal is just as strong at 3 feet as he is at full-size.* GRABBING a guy by the knee and BODY-SLAMMING him to the ground.

And in just 30 seconds-- all of the Mercs are on the ground, unconscious! Cal GROWS back to normal size.

JACK
 That was... so disturbing.

Which is when Ted steps out of the cabana --

TED
 What's this...?

The girls emerge from the Cabana behind him--

BIKINI GIRL
 What the hell, Ted?

TED
 Just give me a minute, would ya? I have to talk to these very unwise individuals.
 Then we'll get smoothies.

As they move off, Ted surveys his fallen security team--

TED
 Unbelievable.

He gets down in Merc #1's face, slapping him awake--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TED
You call yourselves "Death Mercs"?!
(then to Cal and Ted)
So to what do I owe this bit of stupidity?

CAL
Where is he?

TED
Who?

CAL
You know who.

TED
Are we really doin' this? I have no idea
what you're talking about. And while I
appreciate this little visit from the
Magic Mike Christmas brigade--

Cal GRABS Ted by the collar and is about to tune him up --
when Jack jumps in--

JACK
Okay, okay... Before we implode this man's
head all over this heavenly beach, let me
have a word?

Even with his neck in Cal's deadly grip, Ted is smug--

TED
I would recommend getting your hands off
me. This is bad for your health. You don't
know who I know.

JACK
Well, here's what I know. You bought some
information yesterday. Paid quite a bit
for it.

And for the first time-- Ted blinks.

JACK (CONT'D)
Coordinates. In the Arctic. I know this
because I'm the guy who sold them to you.

Now dread, as he begins to put it together--

TED
You're the Wolf..?

Jack just stares back. Ted's face drains white, now visibly
terrified of... something.

(CONTINUED)

JACK
Who's the client? New York?

TED
No. Much, much worse. She'll kill us!
She'll kill us all!

Cal PULLS him close-- *done talking.*

CAL

TED
(whispering, petrified)
I can't say her name. *She'll hear.*

Cal squints-- *this means something to him.* He THROWS Ted down on the chaise lounge--

CAL

Ted hesitates--

CAL

And reluctantly, he does. Cal watches, as Ted etches the letters into the sand. Jack approaches, looking over Ted's shoulder, then reads--

JACK

CUT TO:

INT. INDUSTRIAL SPACE – SAME

Blue STOPS what she's doing-- wherever she is, *she heard this*. Because, as we are about to understand, "Blue" is actually-- GRYLA THE CHRISTMAS WITCH.

She closes her eyes-- and in a sudden BLUR-- her appearance CHANGES from snow cammo'd commando to a dark winter witch.

BACK TO:

ARUBA BEACH - SAME

As suddenly, Ted starts TWITCHING oddly-- his mouth CONTORTS, his head cocks, and his body suddenly PITCHES forward at an unnatural incline. His eyes start to GLOW with a strange supernatural BLUE LIGHT-- which briefly FLASHES in his eyes. *

JACK
Um... Cal? What--

Cal watches, sensing what's happening. Ted's head WHIPS back and forth a couple of times, as though being JOSTLED from within. Then-- *in a completely different voice*-- *

TED
Callum Drift. Storied Warrior of the North Pole.

And now Cal knows for sure--

CAL
Gryla the Christmas Witch.

Gryla is speaking through Ted!

INTERCUT:

INT. INDUSTRIAL SPACE - SAME

Indeed, Gryla speaks here-- but it also comes out of Ted's mouth. And she's somehow able to "see" Cal through Ted's eyes. (*Note-- throughout the rest of the scene, when Gryla talks, we cut between Gryla herself and Gryla via Ted.*)

GRYLA
It has been many years.

CAL
Not enough. *Where is he?*

GRYLA (THRU TED)
He's right here. Fast asleep.

Cal SLIPS ON his aviators, then subtly CLICKS a button on his vambrace and we CUT TO--

ZOE - AT MORA FIELD SITE - MOBILE CONFERENCE ROOM

--as her phone buzzes. She checks-- and her eyes go wide!

ZOE
Get Drift's vambrace feed up on the monitor!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A TECH starts pounding keys and the view thru Cal's sunglasses *oops up on a monitor-- there's a camera in there.*

CAL (ON SCREEN)
Gryla, where are you?

Zoe's eyes widen, quietly--

ZOE
The Witch.

INTERCUT WITH-- CAL AND JACK ON THE BEACH--

CAL
I need him back. Unharmed. Immediately.

GRYLA (THRU TED)
It is not to be, Warrior. I need him for myself.

INTERCUT: ZOE SHOUTING ORDERS AT HER CREW--

ZOE
I need M-WAT teams in motion to every one of her ancestral haunts! *Yesterday!*
Meteorology: Eyes peeled for any sudden weather events! When she gets mad, she triggers ice storms...

BACK TO CAL--

CAL
What is it you want?

GRYLA
The same thing I've always wanted. For hundreds of years. *To make them behave.*
(then)
You know as well as I do, his way has failed.

CAL
That's not true.

GRYLA
Yes, it is. We've seen what happens when we leave them to sort it out for themselves-- *nothing.* They don't correct, they don't improve. *And they don't behave.*

That she's saying something so close to what Cal explained to Nick, in such a creepy way, sends a shiver down Cal's spine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRYLA

It does nothing to reward the righteous.
The time has come to punish the naughty.

And as the blood lust rises in her voice, *it momentarily changes to something a bit more monstrous*-- her "true" voice--

GRYLA

All of them.

--*the sound of which freaks Jack out.* Then back to normal--

GRYLA

Everyone on the list. Everyone who has ever been on the list. Every level. Every infraction. From killers to jay walkers. Anyone who has ever lied or littered. Anyone who has ever been rude or late.

CAL

You're talking about almost everyone.

GRYLA

Everyone that I see fit.
 (delighted)
 Tomorrow, they will all be punished.

CAL

There's a big difference between Level 1 and Level 5.

GRYLA

Today's Level 1 is tomorrow's Level 5. And if they've been on the list before, then they certainly will be again.

CAL

That's not true. People change.

GRYLA

Rarely. And usually *for the worse*. But not anymore. Tomorrow, I'm going to change the world.

(then)

And he's going to help me do it.

CAL

He doesn't punish people.

GRYLA

No. He doesn't. That's why he needs me. To do what he's never been able to do himself.

(to Cal)

Step away, Warrior.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Let him go, Witch.
^{CAL}

I've warned you.
GRYLA (THRU TED)

And I've warned you.
^{CAL}

With an evil smile--

(CONTINUED)

GRYLA
You can't see it yet. But when you wake
up this Christmas morning, the world
will be...
(sinister)
...much, much nicer.

And just as suddenly, Ted starts TWITCHING around again, the
spooky glow in his eyes disappears-- and he regains his
bearings. *Gryla is gone*. Ted GROANS-- returning to himself.

JACK
What in the actual f--

ZOE WATCHES AS HER SCREENS GO BLACK.

ZOE
Get those teams moving! Now!

BACK TO SCENE:

Jack still reeling from what he just saw--

JACK
What was that?!

TED
We have to get out of here! *

CAL
Where is she?!?!

TED
I don't know!! I'm just the middle man! I
brokered the deal-- *

JACK
Caaal?

Cal looks to Jack, who's staring dumbstruck out at the ocean--
--where a janky ICE CREAM TRUCK DRIVES slowly up out of the
surf onto the beach! A plinky, out of tune version of *Feliz
Navidad* blaring from its dripping speakers.

The crowd REACTS as the weird truck PULLS UP and PARKS.
Freaky enough that some go running, while others just stare.

CAL
Stay back!

CONTINUED:

Cal APPROACHES the ice cream truck like the tactical expert he is, peering into the window-- EMPTY-- except for an equipment case, sitting open near the back, containing--

--THREE CARROTS NESTLED LIKE WEAPONS in hard foam cutouts. A small hammock of... *something* is suspended directly above them, rigged to the back door--

-- which Jack is about to open!

CAL
NO, DON'T TOUCH THA--

Too late! Jack OPENS the door and ICE CUBES SHOWER DOWN onto the carrots-- *triggering some kind of magical reaction!* And BOOOOOOMMM!!!-- our guys are BLOWN BACK!

And *very quickly*, the carrots and ice combine and GROW into three hideous, carrot-nosed, coal-eyed --

CAL
SNOWMEN! WE GOT SNOWMEN!! GET DOW-

Now, you may *assume* you know what SNOWMAN ASSASSINS look like, but you don't. These are MONSTROUS SNOW WARRIORS. Hulking, unstoppable, with FEARSOME ICE WEAPONS. THREE OF THEM.

Our guys-- as well as the recovering Death Mercs -- look on in horror as the "Snowsassins" size them up, then--

--one of them pulls an incredibly dangerous looking "snowflake" off of his belt and HURLS it, like a throwing star, at Ted!

Cal PUSHES Ted out of the way and the snowflake HITS the leader of the Death Mercs-- SHATTERING on his chest, *then instantly encasing him in ICE!!*

CAL
The weapons! Don't get hit by their weapons!!

Jack is staring at the giant ice cube of a Death Merc--

JACK
Noted!

CAL
(re: Ted)
Get him out of here!! He's our only lead! Make sure he doesn't get iced!!

Jack GRABS Ted by the arm, leading him away from these monsters, as Cal READIES for the fight--

-- and it's on!

*
*

OUR SNOWMAN ACTION SET PIECE-- ON A BEAUTIFUL BEACH IN ARUBA!

Cal engages, creating space for Jack and Ted to make a break--
-- they RUN for the bar, seeking cover-- when suddenly, a
Snowman seems to LAND from above, cutting them off!

And as our guys FIGHT with these things, DODGING their
weapons, landing ineffective counters-- *they appear to be
indestructible!* We INTERCUT their separate efforts--

When Cal connects, ice goes flying-- *and then immediately
reforms!*

When Jack grabs a knife off the bar and cuts one's arm off--
it immediately regenerates!

Cal picks up a large reclining chaise and USES it to
BIFURCATE the snowman at the waist-- but *even then* the top
half of it's body WALKS on it's hands to REJOIN the bottom
half! *How do you kill these things??*

Behind the bar now, *Jack tries everything he can possibly
think of!* Weaponizing the various items behind the bar--
breaking bottles, wielding a mop, an ice pick...

After series of evasive moves-- with a bit of strategic
shrinking-- Cal's Snowsassin GRABS him, lifting him off the
ground like a rag doll--

--and as Cal tries and fails to land retaliatory blows, he
suddenly has an idea! And with some effort, he manages to
reach in-- and PULL the Snowman's carrot nose off his face!!

And instantly the Snowman MELTS into a puddle of slush!!

CAL
The carrots!! Pull the carrots!!

But Jack can't hear him because he is at this moment being
FLUNG across the bar to the ground. He shakes it off and
spots something that gives him an idea--

-- a small propane tank for a barbecue or space heater. And
in a lightning quick sequence--he douses the Snowsassin in
booze, turn on the grill, uses the ICE PICK to PUNCTURE the
propane tank-- which he then THROWS at the Snowsassin, who
CATCHES it right above the grill--

--as Jack DIVES over the bar--

-- and the PROPANE TANK EXPLODES, *ice flying everywhere!*

The force of explosion BLASTS Jack backwards into the pool!

But on the floor of the bar, the Snowsassin's now unattached
head-- *carrot still in place-- STIRS...*

CONTINUED:

Meanwhile, Ted finds himself unattended-- and realizes -- he could slip away! But when he turns to go, he's suddenly face-to-face with THE THIRD SNOWSASSIN, who drops his giant ice sword out of frame and, though we don't see it connect, we see the result-- *TED GETS ICED!*

Jack sees it happen from the pool-- and the *Snowman sees him* too, then moves for Jack, who SWIMS for his life to get out of the water!

The Snowsassin STICKS his ice sword into the pool-- CAUSING the water to FREEZE, spreading across the pool, CHASING Jack--

-- who just reaches the other side, and is almost out of the pool-- but just a hair too late, because at the last moment, his remaining foot gets stuck in the now FROZEN POOL!

He PULLS at it, trying to free himself, trying to get out of his shoe -- as the SNOWMAN ADVANCES, stalking across the ice--

JACK
Oh dear.... Caaal!!

--now towering over him, the SNOWMAN RAISES his sword-- and just as Jack is about to be ICED--

--the SNOWMAN'S FACE EXPLODES-- as Cal's fist REACHES through from behind -- DE-NOSING the beast-- who suddenly slushifies--

CAL
You gotta rip off their carrots.

Jack catches his breath--

JACK
I'll remember that next time it comes up.

He manages to pull his foot from his shoe, which remains stuck in the ice--

JACK
How do I get my shoe out of here? I can't work barefoot.

CAL
I'm sure you'll figure it out.

Cal approaches the icicle that is Ted Cannon, shakes his head, under his breath--

CAL
I gave him one job...

And as he considers what to do with frozen Ted, he doesn't notice, crawling up behind him-- the melted, misshapen, but still sentient Snowsassin that Jack almost blew up earlier!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

And though we don't see how, this murderous ice blob manages to take Cal's legs out from under him, DROPPING him!

In this new form, though most of it's body is now a small glacier, what remains is-- one arm wielding his ICE BLADE and that CARROT, still attached, just out of Cal's reach!

Cal STRUGGLES, pinned! The Snowblob raises its KNIFE-- and just when things are about to go from bad to much worse...

-- a shoe FLIES in from out of frame, DE-NOSING the bastard-- and turning him to slush. It takes Cal a second to realize what happened, as Jack approaches--

JACK
The carrots, Cal. The carrots.

Cal shakes his head, wipes the slush off his face.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SOMEWHERE, USA - DAY

A METER MAID places a ticket on the windshield of a Mercedes, which is double-parked in a pair of disabled spaces.

AARON ABLE (O.S.)
Aw, come on, dude!!

The Meter Maid heads off as obvious douchebag AARON ABLE approaches, in gym clothes, clearly not at all disabled. He turns his attention back to the phone call he was on--

AARON ABLE
Tell Grandma I don't have time to pick up
her meds. She can take the bus. Goodbye.

He pulls the ticket off the car, yells to the meter maid--

AARON ABLE
Asshole! Get a life!

Then he notices-- a small wrapped present sitting on the car. Odd. He glances at the card-- "For Aaron Able"-- that's him!

INT. MERCEDES - MOMENTS LATER

As Aaron UNWRAPS the gift, opens a small cardboard box, to find-- that snowglobe!

He pulls it out the box, confused... When SUDDENLY, he realizes that it seems to be SNOWING in his car!

AARON ABLE
Whoa--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And as the snow builds in intensity, the snowglobe starts to STEAM, RADIATING a blue light that builds in intensity until it OVERWELMS the car-- and then HE'S GONE.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SAME

Watching from a distance, the Meter Maid smiles-- then in a flash, MORPHS into-- *ONE of Gryla's Yule Lads ("Scout")*, who smiles wide, baring his rotting teeth.

INTERCUT:

INT. INDUSTRIAL SPACE - SAME TIME

Gryla stands next to a shelving rack, impatient--

GRYLA

Where is it?

PARKING LOT - SAME

The Yule Lad approaches the car, peers inside-- Aaron Able is nowhere to be seen. But then he spots something and his smile falls. He OPENS the door and picks up-- the snowglobe, which has fallen onto the driver's seat. And trapped inside it--

--is Aaron Able, now miniaturized and disoriented. He sees the Yule Lad and SCREAMS.

The Yule Lad pulls his phone, to make a call. A beat then--

SCOUT

It's still here.

INT. INDUSTRIAL SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Gryla is livid--

GRYLA

What do you mean, it's still there?
It's meant to return to me.

She turns back to the duplication apparatus--

GRYLA

(to her henchmen)

There's something wrong with the
duplication. The machine is not
working. Fix it. Now!

LEAD MERC

Yes, Mum.

CUT TO:

EXT. - PARADIJS RESORT - POOL - DAY

The aftermath of the Snowsassin attack. Zoe has arrived, with her TEAM from MORA, who are in the midst of a mythological crime scene examination. Photographing the damage, measuring the carrots, inspecting the ice cream truck for clues. In a pop-up tent on the patio, her TECHS have set up their computer rig, so she can monitor the situation globally.

Zoe regards the frozen block of Ted; Cal approaches--

CAL
She iced the broker.

ZOE
Really wanted to shut him up.

CAL
By the time he thaws out, he'll be useless
to us.

She leads him over to the pop-up--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZOE
I have teams sweeping all of her old haunts. So far-- nothing. But look at this-- my guys scanned all the surveillance footage from the Pole last night. Found this--

On the screen-- an image of Gryla, surrounded by her cammoed mercs, as they sneak through the North Pole.

Cal shudders at the sight of her; Jack wanders over, sees the image of Gryla--

JACK
That's her?

CAL
Sort of. She's a shapeshifter. She's actually a fifteen foot, nine-hundred-year-old ogre with two tails and thirteen sons that kill on command. Also shapeshifters.

ZOE
(rubs her head)
Tracking shapeshifters is a nightmare.

Jack tries to accept this, when something catches his eye--

--on the periphery of the pool, a FIGURE in a colorful robe, FLOATING just behind a freaked out RESORT GUEST who was just a witness to a horrific snowman attack.

The Figure reaches into his pocket, pulls out-- a handful of PURPLE SAND-- which he works in his hand for a moment-- where it magically TRANSFORMS into SMOKE!-- which the Figure BLOWS in the Guest's face. Then the Figure's ENTIRE BEING seems to STROBE, before VANISHING in a blink.

JACK
Ok, what-- *is that?*

CAL
What?

JACK
Guy with purple... *something*... over there...

ZOE
(matter of fact)
Oh. The Sandmen. They're making a sweep.

Zoe points to three different spots where we see various parts of this same process-- different SANDMEN APPEARING, blowing smoke, BLINKING AWAY -- it's kind of trippy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ZOE
For the witnesses, this will be a dream
they barely remember.

Jack drifts over to where a GUEST seems to "awaken". She looks around confused for a moment, then shrugs and wanders off. Nearby, a MORA TECH in a hazmat suit PICKS UP one of the carrots with some kind of long-handled instrument.

Jack just shakes his head, heads back over to Cal and Zoe, who are working the case--

CAL
She said she's going to "punish them all".

ZOE
But she needs Nick to do it. What does that mean...?

They pace for a moment, thinking, then--

ZOE
Anything to add here, "Wolf"?

JACK
What should be worrying you is what she didn't say.

ZOE
(realizes)
She wasn't negotiating.

JACK
(*"yep"*)
It's a kidnapping with no demands. That doesn't usually end well.

CAL
Unfortunately, our only lead is now an ice cube. Which was not the plan.
(staring at Jack)
Not pointing any fingers.

ZOE
Cal. Not helpful.

JACK
Yeah, not helpful, Cal.

Rather than murder him, Cal takes a quick slow-burn "lap".

ZOE
What would you normally do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JACK

*Normally? I'd be running credit cards,
looking for passive pings off cell
towers... Any footprint. And not just for
her. Friends, known associates.*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JACK (CONT'D)

But I've never tracked a witch before.
 Dated a few but never tried to find one...

CAL

The point?

JACK

Would she have any kind of footprint I
 wouldn't know about because I'm, like, a
 regular human being? Favorite broomstick
 dealer or something...?

Cal sparks to this--

CAL

Have you run a check on recent U.N.I.'s?
 (off Jack's look)
 Unauthorized Necromantic Incidents.

JACK

Of course.

Zoe turns to the SURVEILLANCE TECH--

ZOE

Run it.

CAL

Maybe go back a few weeks.

On his monitor, the coded results of his search pop up on a digital map--

TECH

Lot of hits. Pretty typical stuff. Couple
 of abjurations in Nairobi, handful of
 divinations in Santiago and New Orleans --

CAL

No. She's a conjurer.

TECH

Got a pair of conjurations in Germany.
 Eight days ago, few hours apart. Picked up
 the echo off the resonator in --

But Cal already knows--

CAL

-- Freiburg.

Zoe's eyes open wide--

ZOE

The Brother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JACK
Who's Brother?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

CAL
Nick's.

JACK
Santa has a brother?

ZOE
Adopted. Yes.

CAL
They're working together.

ZOE
We don't know that--

CAL
No. But can you think of a better place to hold Red? Think about it-- it's under a concealment dome. And MORA doesn't have jurisdiction because of the Treaty.

ZOE
He doesn't leave and we don't visit.
That's the deal. We bust in and Nick's *not* there...?

CAL
MORA's not going. We are. And he won't even know we're there.

ZOE
Cal--

CAL
T minus seventeen hours, Director.

Zoe considers. Then, stern--

ZOE
Keep me in the loop. *Every - step.* In two hours, I brief the Presidents and Prime Ministers and Kings and Queens of *Everywhere*, so they can prepare.

CAL
"Prepare" for what?

ZOE
(somber)
For the possibility of no Christmas.

CAL
It's not gonna come to that, Zoe.

ZOE
I hope not. But they have to be ready.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

Cal takes a deep breath. Jack watches-- *what the hell am I in the middle of here?*

INT. ARUBA TOY STORE - DAY

Cal storms down the aisle. Jack pauses at the front desk--

JACK

Do you happen to have any Wonder Woman action figures?

CAL

That's not how it works.

CAL AND JACK

use the toy store TRANSPORTAL and make the jump to:

INT. A TOY STORE IN GERMANY - CONTINUOUS

Filled with the same toys, but now with GERMAN NAMES. As Cal heads into the store, looking for something, Jack pulls his buzzing phone from his pocket, picks up--

JACK

Hey.

INTERCUT: OLIVIA at home--

OLIVIA

Dylan asked you to come to his concert tonight and you said no??

JACK

What? No. That's not what happened. He didn't ask me to come. In fact, he said it was gonna be "lame"--

OLIVIA

Oh my God --

JACK

What? It's true.

OLIVIA

If he didn't want you to go, he wouldn't have brought it up. An actual parent wouldn't wait for the invitation, they'd just go, whether the kid likes it or not. That's what parents do.

JACK

We both know that's not my strong suit. If he wanted me to come, he should have told me--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLIVIA
He's vulnerable, Jack. He's a kid. And he knows you never show up.

As they continue to discuss, we cut to--

DYLAN

-- in his room, listening to their argument.

EXT. GERMAN TOY SHOP - FREIBURG, GERMANY - CONTINUOUS

Cal and Jack step out into the idyllic city on the outskirts of the Black Forest-- *nighttime here*, in stark contrast to Aruba's relentless sun.

JACK
Olivia, I'm in-- I'm at work. What do you want me to do?

OLIVIA (ON PHONE)
I'm not going to tell you what to do, Jack. You should be able to figure it out. It's not that hard.

(beat)
The concert starts at 7.

JACK
I'm not gonna be back by 7. Look, just tell Dylan--

OLIVIA
I'm not telling him anything. If you want to tell him something, do it yourself.

She hangs up. Jack turns to Cal--

JACK
What?

CAL
I didn't say anything.

Cal pops the blister pack on a Hot Wheels SILVERADO EV TRUCK and -- *spop!* -- turns the toy into the real thing. They hop in.

INT./EXT. SILVERADO EV - MINUTES LATER

Ripping along the Autobahn at ungodly speeds. Jack stewed, until--

CAL
Was that about your kid?

JACK
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL
Dylan, right?

Jack reacts-- *Cal knows his name?*

JACK
Yeah.

CAL
He's a good kid.

Defensive--

JACK
I know he's a good kid. Ya know what? Back off, man. You don't know anything about it.

Cal shrugs-- but Jack can feel the judgement.

JACK
So now I'm getting this from you too?
(then)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JACK

Look, it's not like what you're thinking, ok? His mother and I were never really together... I'm his father, but I've never been *his dad*. She's a *doctor* now. And she's married to a good guy who *is* a dad. The last thing the kid needs is a "spare dad" who's a degenerate gambler, works for the scum of the earth and basically has *nothing to offer*. The best thing I can do is keep enough distance so I'm not getting in the way. And so he's not disappointed all the time.

Cal is about to say something, but decides not to weigh in--

CAL

Uh huh.

JACK

"Uh huh" what?

CAL

Just sayin'... if you're trying not to disappoint him, it doesn't sound like it's working.

Jack takes that in-- it's undeniably true. He peers out the window into the dark night. Then--

CAL

He wants a Fender Pugilist distortion pedal for his guitar.

JACK

He does?

CAL

(nods)
I hope we can get it to him.

And with that, he FLOORS IT.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

The Silverado passes through the foreboding gates of a dark, ancient cemetery. Centuries old. Overgrown and abandoned.

Cal PARKS and just before they hop out--

JACK

Okay, I can't believe I'm asking this-- what's the deal with Santa and his brother?

Cal considers, then decides to tell him--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL

They used to work together. A long time ago. Back in the beginning... Red gave gifts to well behaved children. And The Brother helped him keep track of who they were.

(then)

He started making lists. Red was always uncomfortable with it. He didn't like the idea of a running list of misbehaved kids. But The Brother became obsessed.

JACK

You mean... Santa's brother started the Naughty List?

CAL

Yes. And he started to *punish* kids who were on it. Red was furious. So he took the list. And The Brother never forgave him.

Jack can't help himself-- he's fascinated.

CAL

He went out on his own. Eventually hooked up with the Witch, who was also in the punishment game. Working Iceland and several other Nordic territories. They were together for years, but it ended badly.

JACK

Does The Brother have a name or is it just "Santa's Brother"?

CAL

His name... is Krampus.

MOMENTS LATER--

Cal leads with determination through the burial grounds--

CAL

Now listen to me-- I don't know what's waiting for us in here. The Brother, The Witch... they're *extremely dangerous*. And not in the ways you're used to. So if you see them, do not engage.

JACK

So don't start a fight with a witch. Guess what-- I didn't need you to tell me that. That's something I just know.

Cal approaches a small, decaying mausoleum crypt, looks like it hasn't been touched in a hundred years--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL

If Nick is here, he's probably being held in the dungeon. There's a door around back that the guards use. We'll need to quietly sneak through the courtyard, past the guillotines, break in and head down.

JACK

Past the guillotines, make a right. Got it.

CAL

Also-- do not touch anything. Under any circumstances. There is much here, not of the natural world. You're human and therefore weak. So if you need to touch something, get me to do it.

JACK

Right. Wait... are you *not* human?

CAL

(deep breath)

This is a larger conversation than we have time for right now, ok?

Cal moves to open the large metal door-- *locked*.

JACK

You have a key?

CAL

I got it.

He PUSHES down on the handle as hard as he can-- arm bulging-- after a beat-- BOOP!-- *his vambrace comes alive*, as though sensing his strain. A RED LED LIGHT ILLUMINATES and then -- POP!-- the vambrace gives an extra JOLT-- and BREAKS the handle. The door OPENS ONTO--

KRAMPUS'S REALM

-- a twilit world from some Lovecraftian nightmare. A DREAD CASTLE looms before them. Giant hideous, Gargoyle-esque statues gather moss and spider webs. And in the middle of the courtyard stands a centerpiece statue of the home owner-- a giant horned goat-man-demon-- Krampus.

JACK

Ya know, thinking about it, this feels like a good job for you. I'll wait in the car.

CAL

Shhh...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUST THEN, TWO of the gargoyles COME ALIVE-- *Hellhounds!* Jack FREEZES. With a low GROWL, they JUMP down to the ground, STALKING about. Do they detect our guys?

Cal pulls something from his pocket-- a little yellow RUBBER CHICKEN. He aims his Vambrace at it and -- VOOP!-- ACTUALIZES it into a REAL CHICKEN. Whispers to it--

CAL

Distract them.

And it TAKES OFF, SQUAWKING, half-flying, running around like a... chicken.

The HELLHOUNDS GROWL and GIVE CHASE. But as they DIVE for it, the chicken DODGES-- *this bird has some game!*

Taking the opportunity, Cal and Jack make their move, heading into--

OMITTED

-- THE COURTYARD.

Like some kind of medieval/hardcore punk workshop. And no one in sight. Dangerous looking weapons and tools of all varieties. And at the center of the courtyard sits--

--A GIANT BLACK SLEIGH. Like the bad-ass brother of Nick's sleigh, with hideous GARGOYLE FACES etched onto it.

Jack takes it in, then SPOTS, in a corner--

-- what looks like-- *a pirate's treasure chest*. Wide open. And inside-- a massive PILE OF GOLD COINS. Looking closer-- the coins are encrusted with small grotesque faces and unrecognizable symbols... Jack is intrigued...

Suddenly, they HEAR-- VOICES, *chanting*--

VOICES

OH! OH!
AH! AH!
OH! OH!
CHA! CHA!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cal looks around-- where is it coming from? Then he realizes-- *it's the Gargoyles on the sleigh that are chanting!* And it's getting louder and more URGENT-- developing into something more like a SIREN-- like a mythological CAR ALARM! Too loud! Someone will hear this!

CAL
What did you do?!

JACK
What do you mean, "what did I do?" I didn't do anything!

CAL
Come on!

But too late!

GUARD
THIEVES!

A half-dozen GUARDS appear, cutting off the exits, surrounding our guys, GRABBING them roughly, SEARCHING them --

CAL
My name is Callum Drift! Commander of the ELF. We're not thieves!

JACK
Yeah, we're not thieves!

THEN-- a loud PLINK!-- ECHOES through the night. Then QUIET-- as ONE of the guards bends in front of Jack and picks up-- a gold coin that Jack was trying to steal!

GUARD #2
This was in 'is pocket!

JACK
I can explain that.

SMASH TO:

INT. CELL - MINUTES LATER

Cal sits on a bench, beaten, bedraggled, disarmed of his vambrace-- and locked in a cell in the very same dungeon they were trying to break into. No Nick in sight. Jack sits on the floor, rubbing his bruised hand--

CAL
I told you not to touch anything.

Rubbing his head--

JACK
Innocent mistake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL

You tried to steal a priceless gold piece from the Dark Lord of Winter. Not "innocent", not a "mistake". Now we're 5 hours out -- no Nick! -- and we're in lock-up.

JACK

Not ideal. I get it.

CAL

No. "Not ideal".

JACK

Who leaves their gold just lying around in an open treasure chest?

CAL

He leaves it wherever he wants because he knows nobody will take it *because they know what will happen to them.*

(deep breath)

I shouldn't be surprised.

JACK

'Cause I happen to be on "the list"?

Cal just looks away-- yes.

JACK

You disappointed in me too, Cal?

CAL

I have no expectations of you so I can't be disappointed.

For some reason, that stings.

JACK

Look, man-- I got problems of my own, okay? I happen to owe someone a lot of money that I do not have. Today! And then there's a pile of gold. Just sitting there. I mean, you look at it a certain way, what choice did I have?

CAL

You have every choice. It's all choices.

(then)

You don't just "happen to be" on the list-- you put yourself there. You decide to steal the gold... You decide to look out for yourself, over everyone else on Earth.

Then Cal goes interior, and sad--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAL

Every kid who's counting on us. *Counting on me*, to do my job.

And in that one vulnerable moment, Jack can see the weight that Cal is carrying here. And rather than get defensive--

JACK

Yeah. I hear that.

Cal looks to him, hears the difference in his tone, softens a bit--

CAL

Nick always says-- every decision, big and small, *is an opportunity*.

JACK

To be "nice"?

CAL

To be good. Or not.

This lands on Jack. In combination with their conversation about Dylan... his wheels are turning in a new direction. Then--

CAL

I was one day from retirement. Then this happens. After 542 years. I resigned yesterday.

JACK

You did? Why?

CAL

(hard to say)
I couldn't see it anymore.

JACK

See what?

Cal considers explaining, then--

CAL

It doesn't matter.

INT. KRAMPUS'S CASTLE - NIGHT

Cal and Jack are marched up a stairwell, escorted by a dozen GUARDS-- they HEAR MUSIC. But oddly contemporary music-- sort of an EDM thump. Jack finds it a little surprising, given the environment. As they arrive at--

KRAMPUS'S PRIVATE SALON

The power center of this place. And there's a PARTY going on. A crowd of dangerous and glamorous mythological REVELERS, human and otherwise, raising a ruckus. And at the center of the action--

--**KRAMPUS**. Part mythic horned demon/part Tony Montana. Eight feet tall. Feral and shirtless, revealing his enormously muscular-- and furry-- torso. Master of this Domain. Surrounded by HENCHMEN and BAD ASS MYTHOLOGICAL GUESTS of all varieties.

And right at the moment, he's getting ready to play his favorite game. Standing across a small table from his opponent, he reaches out with his long, bulging arm, touching the guy's face, measuring the precise distance, the arc-- it almost looks ceremonial or affectionate...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK
That's him?

Cal takes a deep breath-- *yep.*

JACK
What are they doing?

CAL
They're playing Krampusschlap.

JACK
"Krampusschlap?"

CAL
It's the official game of Krampusnacht.

And at that very moment, Krampus HAULS back and SLAPS the guy across the face-- *sending him flying about 8 feet!* That's the game! (Slap Fighting-- which is an actual thing-- where two guys stand across from each other and slap each other in the face until one goes down.)

ECSTATIC APPLAUSE from the crowd--

JUDGE
Ever undefeated!

Jack reacts-- *where am I?*

Krampus basks in the glory of his victory-- then notices them. His eyes narrow-- then a smirk crosses his face. As two HENCHMEN move to resuscitate his fallen opponent, Krampus APPROACHES Cal and Jack, massive, full of bravado, voice thundering--

KRAMPUS
Callum Drift.
(then)
'Long time.'

CAL
Dread Lord Krampus.

KRAMPUS
The festivities are just beginning. *But I don't remember inviting you.*

The room quiets to watch, as the giant scoundrel APPROACHES menacingly, GLOWERING down at them--

KRAMPUS
You shouldn't be here. *You know that you shouldn't be here. And yet here you are. In violation of The Treaty. And with a mortal.*

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

84A.

JACK
Uh, Jack O'Malley, sir... or Lord...

Krampus regards him, then SNORTS and SPITS a bit, like some kind of animal-- but says nothing.

GUARD
The big one was armed with this.

The Guard TOSSES Cal's vambrace to Krampus, who catches it, looks it over, chuckles --

KRAMPUS
A Northern Vambrace. Thank you very much.
Just what I wanted for Krampusnacht.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He THROWS it back to the Guard. Cal steps up--

CAL
Krampus, let me explain--

KRAMPUS
You're trying to find him.

Cal freezes-- he knows.

KRAMPUS
And you thought he would be here.
(then)
Well, guess what, Northerner?

Krampus LEANS in and GRINS in his face--

KRAMPUS
He's not here.

He turns his back to them, STALKING the room, GIANT TAIL whipping around dangerously. But Cal won't be intimidated--

CAL
How did you know that he was missing?

Krampus STOPS-- then quietly... *too quietly*--

KRAMPUS
Are you accusing me of something, Drift?

His tail THUMPS against the floor, betraying his agitation.

Instantly, the tension in the room skyrockets. Henchmen move for their weapons. But Cal holds his ground--

CAL
He was taken from The Compound. By The Witch.

His tail SNAPS again, this time KNOCKING OVER a table-- *this seems to be news to him*--

KRAMPUS
Is that so?

CAL
Yes. And I know that she was here not long ago.

KRAMPUS
Indeed she was.

CAL
You and she were partners once. Roaming the countrysides, the villages. Punishing people.

(CONTINUED)

KRAMPUS
That was a long time ago.
(wistful)
She was glorious then. An eighteen foot
Ogre, with the skin of an elephant,
infernal eyes, hair of serpents, giant
pair of tails. And yes, punishing as the
crueler winter.
(then)
We had some wonderful years together.

He drifts off, lost in a memory.

CAL
Then what happened?

KRAMPUS
(ominous)
She got dark. Too dark. Even for me.
(then)
But I've given up that work. I spent over
700 years menacing the naughty, trying to
scare them into decency... *I did my part.*
(then)
The only punishing I do now... *is for fun.*

He points over at his fallen Krampusschlap opponent, still
whimpering and muttering in pain, tending his wounded face.

KRAMPUS
Good friend of mine. Here to celebrate the
Krampusnaucht.

CAL
Today's not Krampusnaucht.

KRAMPUS
Northerner, in this house, it's always
Krampusnaucht.

He grabs a large goblet full of... *something*-- and DOWNS it.
The crowd responds-- they love him.

CAL
Krampus, why was she here?

The room quiets again. Krampus considers a moment-- then
decides to tell him.

KRAMPUS
Many years ago, she gave me a gift. She
came because she wanted it back.

CAL
A gift?

Krampus smirks, thinking about it--

KRAMPUS
The Glaskäfig. On its face, a simple glass snow globe. But its true purpose is nefarious.... and *tremendously punishing*.

Jack and Cal exchange looks-- *Gryla was talking about punishing the naughty.*

CAL
She wants to punish them all.

CONTINUED: (6)

KRAMPUS
The Glaskäfig is solitude. A prison for
but one.

Cal doesn't like the sound of this.

CAL
Krampus... I have to find him.

And now Krampus SMILES wide--

KRAMPUS
And yet... *you're here.*

Then the bold ask--

CAL
Let me go.

KRAMPUS
And why would I do that?

A long beat, as Cal searches for the words... and the ones
that come out surprise even him--

CAL
Because... *we need him.*
(finding the words)
We need someone to see the best in us. To
remind us to see the best in each other.

Jack listens-- *and finally understands what Cal is all about.*

CAL
Now more than ever, we need him. And you
know we do.
(then)
Let me go.

Krampus is unreadable... pacing, considering, then--

KRAMPUS
Northerner... *you're not going anywhere.*

The crowd REACTS-- *Cal's a dead man.* Krampus turns and points
at Jack--

KRAMPUS
You. Get out. And deliver my message to
that MORA scum.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

KRAMPUS (CONT'D)

Tell them that there is a price for this intrusion. Now and forever... *Drift belongs to me.*

Jack takes this in, realizes what he's saying--

JACK

You mean... I can get out of here?

KRAMPUS

I suggest you *run.*

Jack wasn't expecting this, considers what to do... He looks to Cal, who looks down. Krampus approaches Cal, glares down at him--

KRAMPUS

My dungeon is big and lonely. You'll learn to love it here.

(to his Guards)
Take him away.

And as the Guards GRAB him, we PUSH on Jack-- free to go. But in that moment, *he makes a decision*, SCANS the room, then--

JACK

Wait!!

For some reason, everyone STOPS. Jack shoots Cal a look-- "go with me here..."-- then turns to Krampus, oddly confident--

JACK

Mr... Lord Krampus... you and I are not so different.

(then)
I mean, we're pretty different, but I think we have some stuff in common.

KRAMPUS

Do you now?

JACK

I suspect you're a gambler. So am I.

He has Krampus's attention now.

JACK

When we walked in, my guy here told me he thinks he can beat you at your game... Krampal...slop.

CAL

What?!

A stunned MURMUR spreads through the room-- *who would dare?!*

(CONTINUED)

JACK
I told him "no way". But now, seeing how fired up he is... I like my odds.
(then)

You win, you lock us up in that beautiful dungeon of yours for as long as you want. He wins... we walk.

Silence as this floats in the room.

JACK
Unless, ya know, you'd rather not, for some reason. I mean, I get it, he's a big guy. And there's a lot of people watching.

Some considerable cajones here. Krampus GLARES-- then after a long beat-- HE LAUGHS OUT LOUD--

KRAMPUS
Imbeciles! I love it!

CUT TO:

THE TABLE

TIGHT ON-- Cal moving into position at the Krampusschlap table. Nearby, Krampus works the crowd.

Cal looks... concerned. And behind him-- Jack, who pats his shoulders like a corner man--

JACK
You got this.

CAL
He actually slapped someone's face off once. Off.

JACK
(shrugs)
I'm a gambler. I like the scrappy underdog.

CAL
But don't you lose a lot?

JACK
Yeah. A lot.

Krampus steps up to the table. GIANT. Cal looks up at him; Jack SCANS the room, looking for... something.

The JUDGE-- an elder gentleman with wings-- QUIETS the crowd--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE

The rules are as follows-- the contestants will exchange blows, in turn. The first to be knocked out or die, loses.

Cal looks to Jack like he could kill him.

JACK

You got this.

Krampus studies Cal's face--

KRAMPUS

I'm trying to decide whether you're brave or a fool.

CAL

Hard to say, right at the moment.

Krampus smiles at this. Then--

CAL

He's still your brother. And he's never given up on you. Even after everything that happened.

KRAMPUS

And what do you know about it?

CAL

I know him.

Krampus takes this in for a beat, unreadable, then--

KRAMPUS

Yes... but then you also think that you can defeat me at Krampusschlap.

(leans in)

Be my guest.

The CROWD tightens around the table, pulsing with anticipation, as Cal and Krampus settle into position, getting ready.

JUDGE

First Touch!

Cal lines up his swing-- one, two-- then hesitates--

CAL

I wish there was another way--

KRAMPUS

I'm sure you do. Now take your best 'schlap.

(CONTINUED)

Cal lines up again, then hauls back and-- SLAP! -- Krampus's head SNAPS SLIGHTLY TO THE SIDE-- the crowd GASPS in shock! No one was expecting that. Krampus is impressed... and a little surprised. Then he smiles--

KRAMPUS

My turn.

Now tension rises as Krampus begins to practice *his* swing, measuring his ENORMOUS HAND up against Cal's face. The crowd waits in gleeful anticipation. This is gonna be a big shot.

KRAMPUS

I could be merciful and kill you on the First Touch. But what fun would that be?

He measures out his swing again, practicing the trajectory-- each wind-up a preview of something horrible... Then--

KRAMPUS

Or-- perhaps-- you deserve a swift end.
Great and devoted warrior that you are.
(considers his options)
It's hard to decide.

Then he digs in-- one backswing, two backswings, THEN-- Krampus swings with the force of a Mack truck -- *SLAPP!*-- The sound CRACKS through the room like a thunderbolt--

--and Cal is knocked to his knees! Seeing stars-- but not all the way down!

The crowd *OOOHS!* Jack winces.

KRAMPUS

What am I thinking?! We should do this many times!

The crowd ROARS! Jack rushes to Cal's side--

JACK

Come on. Get up.

CAL

You want to give it a try?

JACK

Just get up.

CAL

I can't beat him--

JACK

Will you shut up and trust me?

And Cal does. Dazed, maybe seeing double -- Cal digs deep and RISES. Stumbles back to the table.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE
Second Touch!

Krampus grins, tongue lolling. He's enjoying this.

THE CROWD IS ROUSED and totally focused on the show--

--*enough so that Jack is able to SLIP back a few steps, toward-- the guy who caught Cal's VAMBRACE-- who Jack "accidentally" BUMPS into (mirroring the "bumps" in the opening)--*

JACK
'Scuse me...

Back at the table, Cal measures the distance to Krampus's face with a wobbly hand. Amused, Krampus juts his chin forward.

KRAMPUS
I'll make it easier for you.

Cal draws his arm all the way back-- and right at the moment he's going to fire off his last, weakened blow -- --THWAP!
Jack SLAMS the vambrace around Cal's forearm! It POWERS UP!
Cal is stunned, but capitalizes and -- **SLAPPPPPPPPPP!**
Krampus goes down! The room GOES SILENT.

For a moment, total stillness. Cal and Jack make eye contact-- we should get the hell out of here. They scan the room-- severely outnumbered. Then--

JUDGE
Kill them!

But as everyone goes for their weapons, Cal reaches into his pocket and PULLS -- TWO ROCK'EM SOCK'EM ROBOTS (the iconic red and blue toy boxing robots) and DROPS them to the ground-- aims his vambrace-- and ZAP!--

--ACTUALIZES them into 7-foot "real" versions! More scuffed and intimidating than the "toys". Stock still until--

CAL
Cover me!

And on command, they start THROWING their signature UPPERCUTS. And sure, that's all they do... but they are DEVASTATING UPPERCUTS!--

-- which land indiscriminately on the Guards' jaws-- sending them FLYING them across the room!

And as various guards and Henchmen RUN from the RELENTLESS ROCK'EM SOCK'EMs-- just enough chaos ERUPTS to provide Cal and Jack the space they need--

--to MAKE A BREAK FOR IT! Knocking HENCHMEN out of the way, throwing PUNCHES of their own, as they head for the stairs!

KRAMPUS

Drift!

--Krampus PURSUES-- DODGING a Rock'em Sock'em punch-- then COUNTERING with a ROUNDHOUSE that *KNOCKS its robot head clean off its body.*

EXT. KRAMPUS'S CASTLE - COURTYARD - SAME TIME

Our heroes EMERGE into the courtyard, HAULING ASS toward the portal--

CAL
Ellen! Come on!

THE CHICKEN appears, SQUAWKING anxiously-- followed by The Hellhounds! The chicken -- *who has been keeping these beasts busy for the last 15 minutes*-- FLIES UP and LANDS on Cal's shoulder where, on the run, Cal PLOOPS! her back into a toy!

--as Krampus appears in the doorway, just in time to see--

--Cal and Jack DIVE through the portal, DISAPPEARING INTO THIN AIR!-- JUST NARROWLY AVOIDING death by Hellhound!

And as we PUSH IN on his face, we see the Christmas demon SMIRK. Impressed, despite himself.

EXT. CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

They make it back to the Silverado and double over, catching their breath-- that was close! Jack can't help but chuckle. And after beat, so does Cal.

CONTINUED:

JACK
Holy shit.

And then they're actually *laughing*-- something we've never seen them do together.

JACK
When I woke up this morning, this is not where I thought the day was going.

CAL
I just cheated a Winter Demigod at arm wrestling.

JACK
(laughs)
Sorry about that. It was the best I could do.

CAL
It was great. *Insane* but great.

JACK
Not sure what Nick would say but...

CAL
Under the circumstances, I think he'd be fine with it.
(then, sincere)
Thanks.

Jack tries to shrug off the sincerity--

JACK
It was nothin'.

CAL
No-- you could have left and you didn't.
Thank you.

JACK
You're welcome.

Cal looks him over, then realizes--

CAL
I misjudged you.

Jack half-laughed--

JACK
Not what you expect from a "Naughty Lister. Class 4"?

(CONTINUED)

CAL
*Level 4. But that's what I'm saying--
you can change that. If you want to.*

Jack considers-- is that true?

CAL
*There's a good guy in there, O'Malley.
He's buried under an avalanche of
bullshit. But he's in there.*

Jack smiles-- it's surprisingly nice to hear this-- and to feel that way. Cal sees--

CAL
Feels good to be good, doesn't it?

Jack shakes that off--

JACK
Aaaaacchhh. Alright. Should we go find your guy?

CAL
Let's save Christmas.

Cal gives him an intense look-- clearly expecting Jack to repeat the mantra.

JACK
Right.

CAL
Say "Let's save Christmas".

On Jack-- it just sounds so corny.

JACK
I can't.

CAL
Say it.

JACK
I just said, "let's find him."

CAL
Say it.

Jack shakes his head, then reluctantly, quietly--

JACK
Let's save Christmas...

Cal smiles. They slap hands-- for the first time, a real team.

JACK
Ok, that snow globe he was talking
about. The glossy pig...

CAL
Glaskäfig. It's German for "Glass Cage".

JACK
You speak German?

CAL
Of course I speak German. I speak
everything. Fluently.

JACK
Of course. So. The "Glass Cage".... Why
would... Gryla? Is that her name?

Cal turns to him sharply--

CONTINUED: (4)

CAL

Shhhhh!

Jack immediately realizes what he's done--

JACK

Oh shit.

CAL

Let's go!

And as they JUMP in the car--

CUT TO:

INT. INDUSTRIAL SPACE - SAME TIME

Gryla FREEZES-- *she heard that*-- and she doesn't like it. Just then, ONE of her Yule Lads approaches--

LEAD MERC (YULE LAD)

Mum, we're ready for another test.

GRYLA

Good.

TECH MERC (YULE LAD)

Next one on the list?

She thinks about it for a moment, then---

GRYLA

No. I have a better idea.

EXT./INT. SILVERADO EV - MOVING - NIGHT

Cal and Jack SPEED down a single-lane highway (no apparent consequence of having said Gryla's name), working the case--

JACK

She said she was going to punish them all...

CAL

But it sounds like the Glaskäfig is just for one person. "A prison for but one."

Jack considers this--

JACK

Is it possible that she could... make more of them somehow? Like, with... "witch magic" or something? What are the rules here?

CAL

She would need billions of them. She's immensely powerful, but that's a big lift for a Conjuror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

Right...

CAL

I can't think of a precedent for that.
 Honestly, the only place with that kind of
 manufacturing capacity is--

Cal goes quiet, as a thought enters his head. Then--

JACK

STOOOOP!!!

Cal SLAMS on the BRAKES, because *directly in front of them, in the middle of the road--*

-- is a Grand Piano, filling the lane ahead of them!

The Silverado FISHTAILS to a STOP with inches to spare!

Cal and Jack catch their breath and assess-- collision averted, but *WTF?* After a beat, they HOP out of the car and approach the piano-- *which is playing a Christmas carol.*

JACK

This something that happens to you a lot?

CAL

Unexplained Player Piano on a German
 highway? No. This is rare.

Which is when they notice, sitting atop the piano-- *a wrapped present.* Jack reads the tag-- *"For Jack O'Malley".*

JACK

Do I open this?

CAL

Let me do it.

JACK

You're gonna open *my* present?

CAL

I'll get ya something else.

Cal expertly UNWRAPS the gift, opens the box to find-- a snowglobe!

CAL

Don't touch it.

JACK

Don't worry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They stare at this thing like it's a bomb, contemplating what to do, when suddenly, Jack's phone RINGS-- Dylan is Facetiming... Jack answers--

JACK
Dylan?

INTERCUT:

EXT. WINTER PAGEANT - BACK STAGE - MANHATTAN - NIGHT

The Winter Pageant is about to start. As kids race to get in position, Dylan is on the phone--

DYLAN
Did you send me this stupid present instead of coming to this thing?

Jack is disoriented by the question--

JACK
Wait... what?

Dylan checks the audience and spots-- Olivia, finding a seat for herself.

DYLAN
If you don't want to come, I don't care.

JACK
I wanted to be there. I really did. But there's something--

DYLAN
Whatever. My mom shouldn't have called you. It's fine...

JACK
No, Dylan, it's not fine. That's what I'm saying--

DYLAN
You never come to anything. Ever.

JACK
But I want to... change that.

DYLAN
Just stop, okay? You don't have to... pretend because my mom is guilt tripping you.

JACK
I'm not pretending! I want to find a way to--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DYLAN

No, you don't. If you did, you'd be here.
 If it was important to you. But you just
 don't... think about me like that.

Hearing this from Dylan himself just LEVELS Jack.

Backstage, a nearby STAGE MANAGER calls out--

STAGE MANAGER

Five minutes! Five minute warning!

And as the band starts to assemble into a single-file line--

DYLAN

Look, I gotta go. Just don't send any more
 snowglobes, alright?

JACK

What?! Dylan, what are you talking about?!

Dylan "FLIPS" the camera on his phone to show Jack-- a
*snowglobe in a gift box, identical to the one Jack and Cal
 just found!!*

DYLAN (O.S.)

This thing...

Cal and Jack react-- freaked. On the phone, they sees Dylan's hand REACH in--

CAL

Don't---

JACK

*Wait! No! Dylan, don't touch
 that thing!*

--and GRAB the globe!

Dylan "FLIPS" the camera back to himself and holds the snow globe right next to his face, showing Jack--

DYLAN

Do you actually think that there's any kid
 on Earth who's thinking, "man, I really
 wish I had a snow globe right now"?--

As he talks, he doesn't notice that it has started SNOWING--
 just on him-- despite the fact that he's inside.

JACK

Dylan!

DYLAN

--because I'm here to tell you that--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

But as the globe begins to STEAM and RADIATE that same BLUE LIGHT that we saw with Aaron Able--

DYLAN
What's happening...?

The kids begin to react. Gathering. Concerned.

JACK
Put it down--

And then -- *BLOOP* -- Dylan DISAPPEARS! His phone FALLING to the ground and landing in a way to reveal the other kids staring in horror and confusion.

JACK
Dylan?!
(to Cal)
Did he just... disappear?! Where'd he go?
Where did he go?!

CAL
I don't know!

Jack looks to the globe in front of him-- and GRABS it!

CAL
Jack!

Immediately, SNOW begins to FALL on Jack, the globe GLOWS with that BLUE LIGHT. But his resolve is unwavering--

JACK
That's my kid.

Cal watches as the light OVERTAKES Jack--

JACK
Find me.

And with total certainty--

CAL
I will.

And just like that-- *he vanishes!*

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GRYLA'S SNOWGLOBING OPERATION - SAME TIME

Which we now REVEAL in full, for the first time--

Krampus's ORIGINAL SNOW GLOBE sits at the heart of that machine-- next to an AUTOMATED MANUFACTURING LINE. The machine thrums and pulses with boreal energy, when suddenly --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bloop! Jack suddenly appears inside of a snowglobe, confused and MINIATURIZED, magical "snow" falling around him....

JACK

WHAT THE--

And right next to him, in a globe of his own-- *is Dylan!*

DYLAN

What's happening?! *WHAT'S HAPPENING?!*

JACK

DYLAN!

A GIANT FACE appears on the other side of the glass-- *the Machinist Merc (Yule Lad)*. His enormous eyes inspecting Jack and Dylan in their glass cage.

DYLAN

OHMYGOD!

JACK

Oh my god.

Then the Machinist's giant hand PICKS UP Jack's globe-- JOSTLING Jack, who struggles to stay on his feet--

MACHINIST MERC (YULE LAD)

It worked.

He hands the globe to a familiar, leering face:

GRYLA

Jack O'Malley. What a perfect way to start my collection.

Gryla grins at the trapped duo, then puts Jack back on a shelf. She CALLS off-screen--

GRYLA

Bring production on-line!

And we watch as-- the ENTIRE SNOW GLOBE PRODUCTION LINE COMES TO LIFE-- MASS DUPLICATING the empty snow globes! In a blink, hundred are produced. In another blink, a thousand. Automated arms sorting them onto a CONVEYOR that sends them whizzing away through the city.

Jack watches the systems fire up, remembering the conversation he was having with Cal in the car--

JACK

Wait... are we... where I think we are?

She just smiles.

(CONTINUED)

GRYLA
Tonight, I will deliver one of these to every single deviant on the list. And when they wake up and open their gift? They will join my collection.

JACK
That's sick.

GRYLA
No. It's perfect. *The Glaskäfig only imprisons the Naughty.*
(dreamy)
By tomorrow morning, the world will be in the hands of the Righteous. Finally.
(then)
Tonight, I make The Ride.

Dylan looks to his father, frightened.

JACK
My son's not part of this. Let him go.

GRYLA
Tsk-tsk. He's on The List.

JACK
He's twelve. He's a good kid. I don't care if he's on your list, he doesn't deserve this.

GRYLA
Maybe not yet. *But he will.* Once they're on The List, they rarely come off.

JACK
People make mistakes.

GRYLA
Well, perhaps after tonight they'll learn to be more careful.

She walks away. And off Jack's GLARE--

SMASH TO:

INT. MILITARY BASE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Zoe BLOWS OUT of a Situation Room-like official space, having just briefed the Presidents of Everywhere. A pair of MORA AGENTS, who have been waiting for her, fall in behind--

AGENT
Director, we have Drift.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hands her a phone, which she takes--

ZOE

What happened?

INTERCUT:

Cal, still on the side of the road, speaks into his Vambrace--

CAL

What do you know about the Glaskäfig?

ZOE

(instantly)

Mythical magic snow globe. Used to
imprison to The Naughty. Krampus has it.
Why?

CAL

Not anymore. *She has it.* And I think she's
trying to use it to punish everyone on the
list.

ZOE

Wait, slow down--

CAL

O'Malley just got globed and then
disappeared.

ZOE

WHAT?!

CAL

His kid too.

ZOE

Oh, dear lord...

She approaches a waiting SPRINTER VAN--

INT. SPRINTER VAN - SAME

-- which we discover is actually a high-tech MORA mobile
command. To the MOBILE TECH, in the front seat--

ZOE

Run O'Malley's tag.

MOBILE TECH

Yes, Director.

A large mounted monitor HANGS on a wall. Cal's face appears
on the screen, as well as the "search" for Jack's tracker--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL
Zoe... I think she's trying to mass produce the Glaskäfig.

ZOE
How could she possibly do that?

CAL
Think about it-- what is the *one place* that's capable of something like that?

And it dawns on her--

ZOE
The North Pole. But... Nick's not there. The complex runs on his power. That can't be it. Unless...

CAL
Unless he never left.

Zoe tries to process this--

ZOE
But those snowcats and the jet...

CAL
They were drones. Diversions...
(then)
Nick is still there.

From the corner, the confused Tech pipes up--

MOBILE TECH
Director... I'm not picking up a signal for O'Malley's tracker.

She and Cal look to each other--

ZOE
Because he's under the dome. CAL
He's under the dome.

ZOE
But... I've been talking to your guys all night.

This strikes him oddly--

CAL
You have...? You talked to Garcia?

She nods. Then he has a thought--

CAL
Try Partridge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The Tech hits a few keys and after a beat-- Mrs. Claus appears on the big screen. In her kitchen--

THE MISSUS

Hi Cal.

CAL

How you holdin' up, MC?

THE MISSUS

I can't sleep. Just trying to distract myself. Baking cookies for him... For when he comes home.

She chokes up. Cal sees, tries to soothe her--

CAL

He'll love that. What's bakin'?

MRS. CLAUS

Just put in a fresh batch of *macaroons*.

ECU of Cal's eyes, reacting to the word. Then--

CAL

Hang in. I'll keep you posted.

They disconnect the call. A dark expression falls over Cal's face--

CAL

That's not her.

ZOE

What?!

CAL

Nick hates macaroons.

As they both come to the same realization--

ZOE

They're shapeshifters. The Witch, the Lads... They're all shapeshifters.

CAL

That's how they were able to penetrate the compound, get to Nick... By shapeshifting into my team.

And it dawns on Cal, with the weight of the world--

CAL

The North Pole has been taken.

INT. NORTH POLE MISSION CONTROL ROOM - SAME TIME

"Mrs. Claus" ENTERS and TRANSFORMS into-- a hulking YULE LAD, one of Gryla's henchman/sons. He addresses "Garcia"-- who does the same!

"MRS. CLAUS" IMITATOR
They're onto us.

SCOUT

On the big clock-- "**T minus 00:38:08**" and counting.

TNT. GLOBING AREA = NIGHT

Jack and Dylan, in their snowglobes. Dylan is reasonably freaking out--

DYLAN
Whaddaya mean "we're in a snowglobe?!"
What are you talking about?!

JACK
Ok... I know what this sounds like, but basically... that giant lady we were just talking to? She's a witch. And she got this magic *snowglobe* from a demonic Christmas goat. And now she's making millions of them with some kind of... magical... photocopier or something...?

Dylan staring at him, eyes wide as saucers.

JACK
Look, I don't have all the technical aspects of this down. But I'm pretty sure that these are snowglobes that are used to imprison Naughty people, forever.

Dylan's eyes go WIDE! Jack immediately regrets saying that--

JACK I mean not-- that's not
DYLAN *FOREVER?!*
qonna...

JACK
Wait... no... I was kidding--

Just then-- the mass globe-cloning apparatus SUDDENLY STOPS-- as though the power just went out. Jack notices-- what's going on here?

EXT. NORTH POLE - MANUFACTURING VERTICAL ALLEY - NIGHT

The normally bustling North Pole is still as a photograph, the whole place having come to a grinding HALT with Nick's absence. In one of the manufacturing quadrants--

-- an old TOY STORE, closed for many years and quaint, by comparison to the more modern parts of sprawling metropolis. The front door RATTLES a bit, then BUSTS OPEN--

-- and Cal and Zoe STEP OUT, take it all in. Zoe pulls a device from her pocket--

ZOE
I've got a signal. O'Malley is here.

CAL
Let's go.

Cautiously, they head off.

EXT. NORTH POLE - ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Cal and Zoe discretely follow the tracker through a narrow alley--

ZOE
We're getting close.

Then from behind them--

FRED (O.S.)
Chief? Is that you?

They turn to-- "Fred" (Cal's E.L.F guy from the opening), who's been patrolling the streets. Cal and Zoe exchange cautious looks-- "is that really him?"

CAL
Fred.

FRED
I'll let the team know you're back.

CAL
How 'bout you don't.

They eye each other for a beat-- tense. Then--

CAL
Forgive me in advance, if I'm wrong.

"Fred" looks confused. When suddenly, without warning, Cal HAULS BACK and CLEANS "Fred's" CLOCK! "Fred" instantly FALLS to the ground and TRANSFORMS into-- A YULE LAD! Out cold.

CAL
I knew it. Yule Lad. We can't trust anyone.

EXT. NORTH POLE - MAIN PLAZA - CONTINUOUS

Cal and Zoe round a corner, into-- the eerily empty Main Plaza, following the signal. The tracker sounds a sustained TONE--

ZOE
It says he should be right here.

Yet Jack is nowhere to be seen. Cal looks around and his eyes fall on-- Nick's ORIGINAL WORKSHOP, sunken into the plaza--

CAL
The old tunnel system. Runs beneath the Original Workshop...

ZOE
Let's go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And without blinking, they RUN OVER and JUMP the railing-- on their way.

INT. GLOBING AREA - NIGHT

Dylan is now having a panic attack--

DYLAN

Is this happening because I was ditching?

JACK

What? No!

DYLAN

Is it because I slashed Kevin's tires??

JACK

No, Dylan--

DYLAN

But you said it was for naughty people,
didn't you?

JACK

Well... that's what she said, but--

DYLAN

What did I do? Why is this happening?!

And seeing Dylan lose it, hearing his panic, Jack suddenly finds a gear that is completely new to him-- a father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK
Listen, listen, listen... Pal... Take a
deep breath, okay? Just... take a deep
breath.

Dylan tries to do so.

JACK
Hey, look at me...

Dylan quiets a bit--

JACK
You may have done a couple of things you
shouldn't have but... everyone does.
(then)
You're only in here *because of me*. There's
nothin' wrong with you.

Dylan is soothed by the tone in Jack's voice, looks at him--

DYLAN
What did you do?

JACK
Well... a lot of things. It's a long list.
But bigger than any of that... *is what I
didn't do*.

DYLAN
What are you talking about?

Now Jack takes a deep breath, and finds the difficult words--

JACK
I've been... a terrible father.

DYLAN
That's not true--

JACK
It is. And we both know it. I haven't been
around. Or involved... Pretty much a non-
factor.

Jack continues, perhaps more honest than he's ever been.

JACK
I told myself I was doing you a favor. But
that was bullshit. It wasn't good for you
and it was terrible for me.

DYLAN
Why for you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JACK

'Cause...
 (indicates Dylan)
...look what I've missed.
 (then)
I've made some big mistakes, buddy. And I
know it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

This lands on both of them. His regret is real-- and Dylan can tell. And though they don't notice it-- a tiny CRACK begins to appear in the surface of Jack's globe.

JACK

But the other thing I know is... *I want to be better.* And I know that's easier said than done and I got a lot of work to do-- and I hope it's not too late-- but...

(quoting Cal)

Every day, every decision-- is an opportunity. I want to take some of those opportunities and do something with them.

More cracks appear and GROW. There's a big crevice in the globe now-- it's meant to hold the Naughty, not the Nice.

And though he doesn't notice it, *Dylan's globe is also beginning to crack.*

JACK

And I'm not asking you to believe me... but I am asking you to give me a chance. I may never be the world's best dad... but I can be better. I know I can. And I'm telling you right now-- *I will never, ever stop trying.*

And with that, both globes SHATTER TO BITS! Suddenly, they are standing next to each other, full size and free of their prisons-- *both stunned.*

Then-- Jack pulls him into a HUG. Dylan reciprocates. And for both of them, *this is a long overdue moment. Whatever the future holds, their relationship has changed here.* Then--

DYLAN

What happened...?

JACK

I think I just got a little nicer.

Dylan considers that--

DYLAN

And I did too?

Jack considers, then--

JACK

Naw. Whatever Naughty you got? It comes from *your father's side.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Jack smiles at him; Dylan smiles-- feels good to hear Jack use that word.

DYLAN
Can we get out of here?

JACK
Yeah. But first we gotta find somebody.

He approaches the now dormant globe production system, trying to discern what exactly it is. Hundreds of globes sit on the conveyor-- the operation having been interrupted mid-stream.

(CONTINUED)

JACK
Looks like they turned it off...

Just then, a HUGE HAND REACHES from the shadows, grabs him from behind. All reflex, Jack throws a quick elbow, back-fist combination, then SPINS around to find--

CAL
Ow.

But he never flinches. Just glares, annoyed.

JACK
Cal!

Now Cal hauls back, ready to deliver a devastator of his own.

CAL
If you could make any toy in the world real, right now, what would it be?

JACK
Pirate Queen Barbie. No question.

Zero hesitation-- Cal let's him go.

CAL
Yeah, it's him. ZOE
That's him.

CAL
Thought we lost you there for a minute.

JACK
Think it's that easy to get rid of me?

Dylan EMERGES from a hiding place--

JACK
Hey Bud... so this is our team. Cal,
Zoe... this is Dylan.

Cal smiles-- relieved that Dylan is ok.

CAL
The one and only Dylan. Your dad's told me a lot about you.

Dylan smiles.

ZOE
Nice to meet you, Dylan.

DYLAN
Nice to meet you too.

ZOE
Welcome to the North Pole.

CONTINUED: (6)

DYLAN
(double-takes)
Huh?

Cal examines the globing apparatus, puzzled--

CAL
She brought the old Quatupilcator back
online somehow. This thing's been out of
commission since the late 1800s...

JACK
It was crankin' out snowglobes like rat
turds and then suddenly... *it just
stopped*. Like somebody pulled the plug.
But Cal-- *we saw her*. She said she's gonna
make the ride herself.

ZOE
What?!

JACK
She's gonna deliver those globes to
everyone on The List.

ZOE
But the sleigh, the reindeer... won't lift
off--

CAL
-- *without him*.

And they TAKE OFF RUNNING!

INT. TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

FOLLOWING Cal, who knows these abandoned tunnels like the
back of his hand--

CAL
We can't let the Sleigh take off! There's
a subterranean access to the--

DYLAN
WAIT!!

They all STOP, turn back to Dylan, who has paused next to a
vaulted door. And then they notice what Dylan already did-- a
soft, percussive BANGING on the other side of that door--

DYLAN
There's someone in there.

Cal RUNS OVER-- indeed, someone is POUNDING on the thick
vault door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cal PULLS a couple of levers, OPENS the door, revealing--

-- the ENTIRE E.L.F. squad, in a protective HUDDLE around someone. Garcia steps up--

GARCIA

Chief!

We see who they're protecting, as they separate to reveal--

THE MISSUS

Cal?

--*the real Mrs. Claus.* Thrilled to see him. And Cal can't help it-- a HUGE, if momentary, smile of relief--

CAL

Ma'am.

Then--

THE MISSUS

Where is he?

SMASH TO:

INT. HANGAR - MAIN DECK - PALACE - NIGHT

TIGHT ON-- NICK-- still asleep in that hyperbaric chamber.

PULL BACK as the chamber itself is LOADED onto the back of THE SLEIGH by Yule Lads--

--and PULL BACK FURTHER to see that the Reindeer are IN CHAINS, being SECURED to the front of the sleigh by a jerry-rigged system. *And they're not happy about it.* One of them HEAD BUTTS a Yule Lad, KNOCKING HIM OVER.

Then REVEAL--- *a massive trailer full of duplicate Glaskäfigs, attached to the back of the Sleigh.*

On the clock over head-- "T minus 00:04:03"..." "00:04:02"...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gryla STEPS ABOARD the Sleigh, when SUDDENLY --

CAL (O.S.)
Gryla! STOP!

--she turns to see-- CAL, JACK, ZOE, DYLAN AND THE ENTIRE E.L.F. SQUAD-- lined up in formation at the entrance.

PUSH ON-- Jack-- almost stop time for a second-- as he takes it all in-- the Sleigh, the reindeer, the entire scene... Awe struck. But also, because he is who he is, he notices *everything*-- including the Yule Lad, who has just finished fastening the chains to the Sleigh.

BACK IN TIME-- as the Yule Lads form a wall between our team and the Sleigh-- and they're ready to throw down. Face-off.

Gryla smiles--

GRYLA
Merry Christmas, Warrior.

And with that, she reaches into the air and MATERIALIZES an energetic magical WHIP, which she CRACKS menacingly in the air-- and the mighty Reindeer start to MOVE! Slowly at first, struggling with the enormous additional weight of the globe trailer. And as they strain to get going--

-- ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE! The E.L.F. and the Yule Lads CHARGE at each other! A FULL-ON CLASH-- and neither side will go down easy.

Mrs. Claus PULLS Dylan close--

MRS. CLAUS
Dylan, come with me.

--then Goorman (the gnome ELF AGENT)-- rushes them to safety. Jack sees and Mrs. Claus gives him a look-- "I've got him." On the move, Goorman SLAPS a vambrace on Dylan's arm, hits a button--

GOORMAN
Anything nasty takes a swipe at 'ya, you give 'em a swipe right back, 'eh?

INT. MISSION CONTROL -- FLIGHT COMMAND - SAME TIME

Zoe RUNS up the stairs into Flight Command to find-- three more Yule Lads waiting for her.

She PULLS two baton-like Acquiescers, which double as fighting sticks-- then proceeds to BEAT THE HELL out of the Yule Lads in spectacular fashion, ACQUIESCING them, one by one. As Zoe finishes off the last guy--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

--another Yule Lad appears behind Dylan, who SPINS around and CLOCKS him-- the guy goes FLYING!

DYLAN

Whoa!

BACK TO:

INT. HANGAR - MAIN DECK - NIGHT

The Sleigh is getting away! Cal and Jack TAKE OUT a Yule Lad, working together--

--then TEAR OFF after the Sleigh and at the last possible moment, JUMP onto the globing trailer!-- JUST AS the whole caravan passes thru the hangar door onto--

EXT. RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

--the runway bridge-- which, designed as it is for the Sleigh, is covered in snow, a twenty story drop on either side.

The Reindeer PULL down the icy runway, HAULING that trailer full of snowglobes. And HANGING off the sides of the trailer, working their way toward the Sleigh-- are Cal and Jack!

EXT. MOVING SLEIGH - TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

The vat of duplicate Glaskäfigs glimmers menacingly between them, as they reach the head of the trailer and make the short but perilous JUMP to the back of the sleigh--

--CLIMBING up alongside Nick's chamber, Cal sees-- *Nick, still fast asleep*--

--then DROP onto the deck, behind Gryla who seems not to have noticed their presence, focused on the Reindeer--

--SNORTING, GRUNTING-- still STRUGGLING, but picking up speed.

Cal and Jack exchange quick looks-- Jack wondering "What now?" Cal indicating-- "Follow my lead". And they MOVE ON GRYLA--

--who suddenly SPINS around --

GRYLA

Oh Warrior. What have you done?

--then UNLEASHES A SUPER-HUMAN ATTACK! And not with magical rays or spells or anything like that. Straight-up devastating hand-to-hand COMBAT-- and incredibly, in just a few quick moves, the diminutive witch MANAGES to THROW the two guys from the Sleigh!!

Cal goes FLYING BACKWARDS, barely managing to GRAB onto the trailer!

Jack goes FLYING FORWARD-- *straight into the Reindeer team! He BOUNCES off the back of one and DROPS down between them, just barely managing to GRAB HOLD of the thick CHAINS that bind them--*

-- HE HOLDS tight, DRAGGING along the runway, HOOVES POUNDING down on either side! STRUGGLING to pull himself back up, he suddenly finds himself hanging on by--

-- that latch that locks the Reindeer to the Sleigh!

Which is when he gets an idea-- and starts working to UNHOOK the latch!

The Reindeer GAIN SPEED --

--as Cal works his way along the side of the trailer toward Nick.

The Reindeer are at full speed now, GALLOPING as--

Jack WORKS AGAINST that latch, struggling to move the barrel that LOCKS it. Up ahead-- they're running out of runway... And suddenly, he feels--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

--a GOLDEN LIGHT start to RADIATE around him-- the Reindeer's antlers are starting to GLOW! And sensing that something is starting to happen-- REDOUBLES his efforts!

As Cal JUMPS back onto the Sleigh--

Gryla watches as the Reindeer begin to LIFT OFF!

And just as they do, Jack finally manages to -- UNHOOK the Latch! The chain comes LOOSE and in a domino reaction-- SLIPS through the metal RING SYSTEM, FREEING THE REINDEER--

--WHO ROCKET OFF INTO THE NIGHT LIKE SHOOTING STARS--

--as the Sleigh comes CRASHING BACK DOWN TO THE RUNWAY!

Jack LANDS HARD!

AND GRYLA IS THROWN CLEAN OVER THE EDGE, PLUMMETING to the ground below!

On the deck, Cal HANGS ON as the crashed Sleigh SKIDS to a STOP, right at the runway's edge!

Cal RUSHES to Nick's chamber and nearly RIPS OFF the door!

CAL

Nick!! Nick!

But Nick is UNCONSCIOUS.

CAL

Nick?

With great effort, Cal PULLS him out, lays him gently on the deck. Cal swallows-- this is bad.

EXT. NORTH POLE - SNOWBANKS BENEATH THE RUNWAY - CONT.

On the ground, 20 stories below, Gryla is passed out in a snow drift. Then she TWITCHES. And her HAND starts to... GROW. The VERY FIRST MOMENT OF A TRANSFORMATION.

BACK TO:

EXT. RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cal is still trying to revive Nick, gently patting his face--

CAL

Come on, Red! Wake up... Wake up!

When suddenly he feels a RUMBLING... As though the bridge itself is shaking.

On the runway, Jack feels it to, looks around then spots--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- A GIANT OGRE HAND APPEAR over the end of the runway.

JACK (O.S.)
HO-LY SHIT!

On the Sleigh, Cal rises, just in time to see--

-- GRYLA-- now in her 18 foot Ogre form-- PULL HERSELF up onto the runway! An OGRE GIANTESS the size of an oak tree! And hideous, with a pair of dinosaur-sized whipping tails. Her arms hugely muscled, her hands GIANT, MONSTROUS CLAWS the size of wheelbarrows! She ROARS with a mouth filled with razor sharp teeth, and the entire runway vibrates in fear!

Cal JUMPS down from the Sleigh; Jack hurries back, putting himself behind Cal, freaked.

CAL
Jack... run.

JACK
Naw. Not today.

CAL
This could be bad.

JACK
Honestly, if I go down *trying to save Santa Claus...*? There are worse ways for a guy like me to go out.

Gryla APPROACHES, towering and terrifying--

--Cal stands his ground--

CAL
Gryla! It's time for you to go!

GRYLA
And so I shall.
(indicates Nick)
But I'm taking him with me.

CAL
You're not taking him anywhere.

GRYLA
With his power and his list... there's no limit to what I can do. The Gläskafigs are just the beginning.

Cal stares up at her--

CAL
If you want to get to him... you're gonna have to get thru me first.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRYLA

Gladly.

Her two GIANT TAILS start WHIPPING around frantically and dangerously, she BARES HER TEETH-- ready to attack! -- when SUDDENLY--

A FAMILIAR RHYTHMIC NOISE. Faint, but growing LOUDER--

VOICES (O.S.)

OH! OH!
AH! AH!
OH! OH!
CHA! CHA!

As KRAMPUS'S DARK SLEIGH SUDDENLY APPEARS, HOVERING OVERHEAD--

-- when suddenly, Krampus JUMPS out, DROPPING DOWN to the runway, joining Cal and Jack. He turns to them briefly--

CAL

Lord Krampus... you came.

KRAMPUS

You imbeciles have no idea how to talk to a woman like this. A *real woman*.

He turns to the monstrous Gryla, towering over him--

KRAMPUS

Hello, Love.

GRYLA

What are you doing here?

KRAMPUS

You took back the Glaskäfig. But you didn't tell me what you had in mind.

GRYLA

You've gone soft. I knew you couldn't stomach it. But I'm going to finish what we started.

KRAMPUS

No. You're doing this to get back at me. To punish me. By taking my brother.

GRYLA

This has nothing to do with you, you narcissistic fool!

KRAMPUS

And in the month of the Krampusnacht, no less.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GRYLA

It's Christmas Eve! Nobody thinks of December as "the month of Krampusnacht!" Now get out of my way!

KRAMPUS

I can't do that. Lovely as it is to see your miserable face... *my brother has somewhere to be.*

He PUFFS UP, ready to throw down, dangerous and awesome-- WHEN SUDDENLY--

--one of Gryla's GIANT tails WHIPS around-- and with the force of a Mack truck, KNOCKS KRAMPUS BACK, 50 YARDS DOWN THE RUNWAY!! --where he LANDS with a THUD-- OUT COLD!

Cal and Jack are STUNNED! So stunned that they don't notice HER OTHER TAIL coming up behind them-- and THWACK!!--

--they go FLYING too! Jack gets sent back behind the trailer, and Cal into the side of the sleigh-- where he BOUNCES off-- painfully-- to the ground... But after a beat-- HE RISES.

AND THERE HE STANDS. Between Gryla and The Sleigh. On which lies his boss, friend, father figure... And Principal Protectee. Fire in his eyes. He's about one third her size-- but he cares about that, not one lone fuck.

GRYLA

Stand down, Warrior.

CAL

If you want to take him... you're gonna have to kill me.

GRYLA

As you wish.

She SLAPS him back into the Sleigh again-- rough!-- and AGAIN he struggles to RISE, wobbly--

--Gryla GRABS him in her enormous hands, LIFTS HIM UP-- and starts to SQUEEZE! And as he GASPS for breath, she DANGLES him over the edge of the runway, when SUDDENLY--

VOICE (O.S.)

GRYLA!! ENOUGH!

And standing on his Sleigh, his immeasurable strength quickly returning-- STANDS NICK.

Gryla turns to him, still holding Cal.

GRYLA

Any last words for your most faithful warrior?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

NICK

Only one.

And with a SUPER-NATURALLY POWERFUL VOICE, that THUNDERS through the night sky--

NICK

KAVALAME!!

Gryla wasn't expecting that. And in the blink of her disorientation, Cal CLICKS his heels, SHRINKS and SLIPS from her GRASP--

--he DROPS to the ground, runs between her legs, turning her around, just in time to see--

--COMING RIGHT AT HER-- EIGHT PAIRS OF GOLDEN LIGHTS BLINK TO LIFE in the night sky. The Reindeer! They STREAK toward her like golden comets!

CAL

Merry Christmas, witch.

--as THE REINDEER collide into Ogre Gryla like a runaway freight train-- LIFTING, TOSSLING and ultimately TOSSING HER--

-- INTO THE GIANT GLOBE TRAILER! Snowglobes EXPLODE under her weight and that BRIGHT BLUE LIGHT OVERWHELMS the entire runway!

And when it clears-- Gryla has been globed!

Jack JUMPS into the trailer and picks up the globe. Then he laughs at the irony.

In the globe, Gryla GLARES back at him.

(CONTINUED)

ON THE SLEIGH-- Cal RUSHES back to Nick--

CAL
Red!! Red... you ok?

Nick considers what's just happened, then--

NICK
What took ya so long?

And finally-- Cal SMILES. Big and wide. His friend is back.
He found him.

Nick surveys the scene, takes a deep breath, then SPOTS--

--a GIANT FIGURE EMERGING from the FOG-- KRAMPUS. Who stops.
A moment of quiet acknowledgement-- the first they've seen
each other in... a very long time. Then--

NICK
Look who cat the dragged in.

KRAMPUS
Let's not get mushy.

Nick laughs, then--

NICK
Thank you. Brother.

And much to his own surprise, *Krampus feels that--*

KRAMPUS
Merry Christmas. Brother.

NICK
You should stay a while.

Krampus grins then WHISTLES LOUDLY, the sound echoing--

KRAMPUS
Not a chance.

And suddenly, his Sleigh APPEARS at the side of the runway, having been *summoned*-- Krampus RUNS and JUMPS on--

KRAMPUS
Now get to work!

And he BLOWS OFF into the night sky.

With steely determination, Nick turns to Cal--

NICK
It's go time.

THE MUSIC KICKS IN-- High intensity "Christmas action score". The clock is ticking! And these guys have a VERY BIG JOB to do.

BACK IN MISSION CONTROL

Not a second to waste, Mrs. Claus JUMPS into the command chair, DONS the head-set--

THE MISSUS
Sky Train, this is Partridge. Back in the chair and back on track.

SKY TRAIN GUIDANCE OFFICER (O.S.)
Good to have you back, Ma'am.

CONTINUED:

But Mrs. C is all business, running the op like a NASA crew chief. The giant countdown FLASHES RED-- "T PLUS 00:05:42"

THE MISSUS (INTO HEADSET)
 We are currently almost six minutes behind schedule, so we're gonna run this pre-flight like our hair's on fire.

INT. HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

A FLURRY of activity! The Sleigh and the Reindeer in ready position, as a hundred HELPERS rush to make up lost time-- servicing the Sleigh, brushing and feeding the Reindeer, MOUNTING a cargo container, finalizing the route...

Off to the side, Dylan watches the spectacle of it all. As Jack sends a message to Olivia-- **"I've got Dylan. He's fine."**

She responds-- **"Oh thank god".**

Then he adds-- **"Better than fine actually. He's great. I'll have him home for Christmas morning."**

Zoe approaches, smiles--

ZOE
 Thank you.

JACK
 Pleasure.

ZOE
 We'll wire your fee first thing in the morning.

He'd completely forgotten. He looks to Dylan, then--

JACK
 Naw. I'm good.

ZOE
 You know, MORA could use someone with your skill set.

He realizes what she's saying--

ZOE
 Think about it.

ACROSS THE HANGAR-- Cal stands next to a door, reviewing some final bit of planning with Garcia, when the door OPENS--

--and Nick EMERGES-- COOL as the other side of the pillow, FULL STRENGTH and ready for business. Santa like we've never seen before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
Let's do this thing.

CAL
Let's do this thing.

He and Cal SLAP and CLASP hands, in that muscular way.

Then he spots-- two MORA AGENTS, putting the snow globe containing Gryla into a lucite box. Zoe approaches--

NICK

ZOE
We're going to put her somewhere safe.

NICK

(then)
She wants to make things better. She just goes about it all wrong. But she might just come around one day.

Zoe smiles at him-- he really does see the best in everyone.

And IN HER GLOBE-- Gryla has "heard" her name-- and the sentiment moves even her.

In the corner, Jack and Dylan see him and their jaws drop--

DYLAN
Wait... is that...?

JACK

And as Nick CLIMBS aboard the Sleigh, he spots them--

NICK

Both starstruck kids, right this second--

Hi. DYLAN Hi. JACK

NICK
Thanks for your help today.

JACK

I know.

CONTINUED: (2)

Big smile. Of course he does. Then--

NICK
You boys comin'?

Wha... DYLAN JACK
Really?!

Cal appears next to Nick, smiling--

CAL

Jack and Dylan exchange looks-- then RACE to join. We didn't know that a guy like Jack could be this... *happy*.

ZOE
Commander Drift!

CAL

ZOE
Have a great flight.

He smiles, POUNDS his heart, points at her-- and she points back.

Nick assumes his position behind the controls, where Mrs. Claus has been finalizing the preparations. She wraps herself around him meaningfully, he reciprocates--

The MISSUS
You ready to light this candle or what?

NICK
Be back soon.

As she JUMPS OFF, HEAR over a speaker--

FLIGHT DIRECTOR (ON P.A.)
Red One, you are clear for take-off.

He TURNS to the Reindeer--

NICK
All right, ladies... *KAVALAME!!*

And the reindeer PUNCH IT, BLASTING us out of there and into--

OUR BADASS ACTION DELIVERY MONTAGE

In the style of an Ocean's heist montage or a Mission Impossible-- *the sequence that only THIS MOVIE can do*. We see what REALLY happens when Nick and his team execute The Ride.

CONTINUED:

We see that there is an enormous Cargo Bay in the sky that looks like a STAR from a distance-- but is actually a staging place for millions of cargo containers --

--which are SHUTTLED to and away from the Sleigh, by SUPPORT VEHICLES piloted by Helpers, then ATTACHED in motion to the Sleigh's port. The ARMADA working in sync to maintain the Sleigh in flight, OUTPUTTING CLOUDS AND SNOW beneath them to obscure the magical work from the world below...

And then we see the main event-- as Nick is handed a sack-- and a circular PORT IRISES OPEN in the deck of the Sleigh-- and Nick JUMPS THROUGH-- REPELLING down an endless LINE to a chimney-- *where, barely stopping,* he HOOKS a GRAPPLE-- SHRINKS himself to 2' size and DESCENDS down into the house--

-- where he very quickly and methodically lays out a handful of tiny presents and then, with a WAVE of his hand-- TRANSFORMS them to full size!-- before BOLTING for the fireplace, GRABBING the line and -- ZIPPING BACK UP!-- POPPING out of the CHIMNEY-- GROWING back to FULL-SIZE, then RUNNING FULL SPEED across the roof and JUMPING to the next!

We see him FLYING ALONG on Zip Lines, MILITARY CRAWLING on his elbows thru air conditioning ducts, BASE JUMPING off of The Sleigh!

We see ELF Agents standing by chimneys-- the advance team, waiting for him. And Helpers-- removing and replacing spark arrestors and vents, so that he can get thru...

We see a child asleep on the stairs, where he had been waiting for Santa, and realize it's the little boy from the mall-- and see Nick's hand leave the case for a video game-- "Ultimate Vampire Assassin 4".

And we see Cal supervising from the Sleigh, choreographing the movement... We see him on rooftops... We SEE HIM DOING WHAT HE WAS BORN TO DO-- *watching Nick's back* and making sure that he is able to do his crucial work.

We see Jack and Dylan -- wind in their hair, taking it all in... witnessing something that *nobody* gets to see. Dylan watches in wonder; Jack watches his son in wonder, PULLING him close.

We see the Sleigh SWOOPING AND DIVING through the sky, from place to place, country to country, in constant motion...

And WE SEE PEOPLE all over the world, waking up to Christmas morning-- smiling, laughing, pulling each other close. And we remember that HOPE IS ALIVE AND WELL, as the Christmas Spirit spreads like wildfire in the wake of the The Ride.

We see Zoe and The Missus, monitoring their movement from Mission Control-- Mrs. Claus calling shots, missing nothing--

CONTINUED: (2)

THE MISSUS
Bank left, deploy North, heading for the
8th Arrondissement...

-- Zoe awed by her detailed knowledge of the ENTIRE WORLD.

We see Nick GRABBING cookies of all varieties, from all over the globe... Milk in America, beer in Germany... Carrots for Reindeer... Nick munches an OREO from a home on one side of the planet, a piece of KFC CHICKEN left for him in a home on the other (yes, that's a thing in Japan!) Notes in dozens of languages...

We SEE him WORKING SO HARD. Determined, unstoppable. Delivering joy to every corner of the planet, if it's the last thing he does. And more than anything else, we see that he LOVES IT.

BACK IN THE SLEIGH

racing the rising sun, still just below the horizon, headed for home. And as they skim over the blue, blue Arctic ice, Dylan turns to Jack--

Jack and Dylan are glowing, amazed at what they've just witnessed--

DYLAN
Were we just in Hawaii?

JACK
Dude, we were just in Hawaii!

DYLAN
That was amazing!

JACK
(realizes)
He really does it. He really goes everywhere in the entire world -- *in one night.*

DYLAN
Santa's a lot cooler than I thought he was.

JACK
And a lot more athletic.

DYLAN
I think he must have demolished 4 million cookies.

Jack laughs--

JACK
The guy's a beast.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

--REVEAL CAL watching the sweet scene. And seeing father and son so happy, Cal smiles... and something magical happens--

POV - CAL: as his vision blurs and, for just a moment... he SEES JACK AS THE CHILD HE ONCE WAS, standing beside Dylan.

BACK TO SHOT as Cal realizes what's just happened. It's a bit of a moment for him; one that Nick has been watching--

NICK
You're seeing it, aren't you?

Cal looks to him-- yes!

NICK
I knew you'd get it back.

CAL
I lost it there, for a while.

NICK
It's easy to lose it, Cal. The important part is to keep trying.

A moment. Then--

CAL
Nick... I'd like to stay on. If you'll have me.

Nick SMILES WIDE, then CLAPS him on the back.

NICK
You got it, Commander.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Cal smiles at the title-- this is his calling. And Jack spots this moment. Cal sees Jack notice--

CAL
Nice work, "Wolf".

JACK
You too, "Commander".
(then)
Did we just save Christmas?

CAL
(laughs)
I think we just saved Christmas.

Mutual respect, but also-- friends. Then Jack turns to Nick--

JACK
Mr... Saint...

NICK
"Nick" is fine.

JACK
Did you know it would end up ok?

NICK
No.
(then)
But I believed. I always believe. That's my job.

DYLAN
Believe in what?

NICK
In each other. In ourselves. In all of you.
(then)
There's more good out there than we realize. Even when things look their worst. Even the darkest night gives way to the most beautiful dawn.

And on cue, the sun peeks up. Glorious. Resplendent. Turning the Arctic into a wonderland of prismatic colors.

NICK
See?

And as the Sleigh returns home, the CAMERA RISES... UP, UP, UP... into the most gorgeous shot of the North Pole, we--

FADE TO BLACK.