

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

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FADE IN

INT. TIM'S CAR -- NIGHT

TIM, 20, stares out the window. Wan, dissipated, he shivers as he watches a minivan pull up to a gas pump in front of a brightly lit convenience store decorated in Christmas holiday colors.

By the door, a large, lighted Santa. Syrupy Christmas MUSIC on the radio stops, and an ANNOUNCER pipes in.

ANNOUNCER

Again this year, we will bring you Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol in its entirety and without commercial interruption. This inspiring story needs no further introduction.

(beat)

'Marley was dead: to begin with.'

Tim leans over to the passenger seat where a line of cocaine waits on a mirror. He snorts the coke and shakes his head. What a hit.

Opens the glove compartment and pulls out a nasty looking automatic. He tucks the pistol in his waist and zips his jacket over it.

ANNOUNCER

'There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman...'

With a last look around, he kills the radio and pushes out.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE GAS PUMP - CONTINUOUS

Snow falls. A MAN, 40s, in SANTA CLAUS suit, pumps gas into the minivan. He looks up as Tim nears.

SANTA

Hello, Tim.

Tim stops and regards Santa.

TIM

Who the fuck are you?

SANTA

Who is a good question. A better question is when?

TIM

When?

SAMTA

When. You see, I'm you in about twenty-five years. Well, I could be you if you don't get killed tonight.

TIM

What the hell are you talking about?

SANTA

I'm talking about that 9 mil you got tucked in your belt.

Tim's hand touches the pistol under his jacket.

SANTA

And that silly plan you have to rob this place.

TIM

What the fuck are you?

SANTA

I told you, I'm you with any luck.

TIM

Yeah, well, Santa-Me, you better fill up and get your sleigh out of here. You don't even have to pay for the gas. Merry Christmas.

Tim turns for the store.

SANTA

I know about the drugs.

Tim turns back.

TIM

You don't know shit.

SANTA

I know April dumped you when you spent your money on cocaine instead of a ring.

Tim steps closer, hand on pistol.

SANTA

I know your parents divorced two years ago.

TIM

Shut the fuck up.

SANTA

I know your mother is dating a man from Russia she met on the Internet, who wants to marry her for a green card.

TIM

SHUT UP OR BY GOD, I'LL SHUT IT.

SANTA

And your father is somewhere in Thailand having sex with young boys and shooting heroin.

Tim steps close and sticks his pistol in Santa's belly.

TIM

Want to die, fuck off? Want that?

A young GIRL, 9, opens the door and leans out.

GIRL

Daddy, can we open the candy?

SANTA

(to Girl)

It's too late. You won't sleep, and if you don't sleep, the real Santa can't come down the chimney.

GIRL

Yes, daddy, are you almost finished?

SANTA

Just another minute.

The Girl shuts the door.

SANTA

Her name is Fan. She and her brother, Jacob, are excited about Christmas.

TIM

I don't give a rat's ass what her name is. Get in your car and drive.

Santa removes the handle from the minivan and replaces it on the pump.

SANTA

See the guy with the SUV?

Two rows away, a MAN, 30s, pumps gas.

SANTA

He's an off-duty cop with a 40 Smith and Wesson under his coat. You two will meet inside, and he's a better shot. You'll hit him, but he'll kill you.

TIM

Thanks for the tip.

Santa steps close to look into Tim's eyes.

SANTA

Her name is Belle, and she's the best wife a man could have. But you won't know that if you go inside.

TIM

I don't know how you know what you know, or why you're stalkin' me, but I don't for one fuckin' second believe you're some kind of future me. And I don't much care. I need cash, and this place has cash. It's that fuckin' simple.

SANTA

I guess it is.

Santa moves to the minivan door and faces Tim.

SANTA

Well, you can't say I didn't try. The cop's left-handed. That might help.

Santa slips into the minivan. Tim watches until the minivan pulls into the street. Then, he turns for the store.

Ahead, the door opens in a flash of BRIGHT LIGHT.

INT. TIM'S CAR - LATER

ANNOUNCER

'May that be truly said of us, and  
all of us!'

Tim's head rests on the steering wheel.

ANNOUNCER

'And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God  
bless us, every one!'

Tim wakes, slowly raising his head. He looks around, trying  
to get his bearings. This isn't what he remembers.

ANNOUNCER

And that concludes Charles Dickens'  
A Christmas Carol. We hope you  
enjoyed it. Merry Christmas.

The radio breaks into a Christmas CAROL. Tim looks at the  
mirror, no longer holding a line of coke. He looks out the  
windshield.

And all the lights in the store wink out. It's closed.  
Only, the lighted Santa by the door is still lit.

Tim removes the pistol from his pants and returns it to the  
glove compartment. With a last glance at the lighted Santa,  
he starts the engine.

FADE OUT