

An X-Mess Story  
by  
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INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP/TOYROOM - MORNING

THE ENTIRE MOVIE IS SHOT BY AN UNSEEN DOCUMENTARY CREW

It's a busy day in Santa's Workshop. It is first thing in the morning and the elves are working full tilt trying to get as many toys constructed in a short amount of time. The front door opens and through a flurry of snow, in walks JOHN, Santa's accountant. Though he is an elf, he is a average sized man in his mid-thirties. He is dressed business casual as opposed to the rest of his kin, in green and red outfits. He sips on a Starbucks coffee while heading to his office. TWINKLE, the elf in charge of the workshop floor approaches John, happily.

TWINKLE

(giddy)

Christmas is soon going to be here!

JOHN

(offhandedly)

Yeah. Fantastic Twinkle. Cannot wait.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Twinkle sits on a very ornate chair, happy to be interviewed.

TWINKLE

It's not that John lacks Christmas spirit. He doesn't really have spirit for any holidays. He just lacks spirit... overall.

(pause)

I guess that's not really a good defense...

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

John looks bewildered as he is being interviewed.

JOHN

You mean, you really got permission to film this?

(looking at interviewer)

Wow.

(pause)

And I like some holidays.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

I really like Halloween... not going out or anything. But I hold these fantastic horror movie marathons. I choose horror films from the early classics right up to the modern classics. Each Halloween I tackle a different theme as well. Last Halloween was "Capitalism as a movie monster!". It was amazing. And next Halloween I think a few of the elves are going to join me. At least they said they would.

(pause)

It's really fun.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP/TOYROOM - MORNING

TWINKLE

See you bought another coffee. Don't like the coffee here? It's free.

JOHN

No... I mean, Starbucks is on my way here anyway.

TWINKLE

(suspiciously)

We're in the North Pole.

John sighs, defeated.

JOHN

Okay. It's just that... why is it always candy cane flavoured coffee? Why can't we just drink normal, ordinary coffee?

Twinkle gasps in shock.

TWINKLE

Candy canes are delicious!

JOHN

Yeah, sure. But every day? I mean, c'mon....

TWINKLE

Why wouldn't you want delicious candy canes every day?

JOHN  
(getting frustrated)  
Yeah. You make a surprisingly great  
point. Anyway, duty calls.

As he attempts to leave Twinkle clears his throat. John  
solemnly realizes this means Twinkle has more to say.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Anything else, Twinkle?

TWINKLE  
I've got a surprise for you!

JOHN  
Oh no. You didn't....

Twinkle holds up a new elf suit in John's size. John frowns  
as Twinkle beams with delight.

TWINKLE  
I fixed it up again for you after  
you accidently ripped it... again.  
Funny how you keep ruining your  
suits.

JOHN  
Yeah. Weird how that keeps  
happening. A real mystery.

TWINKLE  
Well....

JOHN  
Look, Twinkle, I'm already dressed  
for today.

TWINKLE  
(happily)  
Put it on.

JOHN  
I'd hate to have to wash what I'm  
wearing after only having it on for  
less than an hour.

TWINKLE  
Put it on.

JOHN  
I'll wear it tomorrow. I'll try not  
to ruin it in the meantime.

Twinkle simply looks at John and crosses his arms. John sighs and nods, knowing he does not really have a say in the matter. He heads to the bathroom and immediately comes out wearing the elf suit. Needless to say, he looks ridiculous.

TWINKLE  
It looks great!

JOHN  
Yes. Great job Twinkle.

John turns and heads to his office, unhappily.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(mumbling)  
Let's see how easy it is to fix  
after I put it through the  
snowblower.

Twinkle once again clears his throat. John turns around again.

TWINKLE  
Oh John, one more thing.

JOHN  
Yes?

TWINKLE  
Santa wants to see you later.

JOHN  
(concerned)  
Did he tell you what it was about?

TWINKLE  
Nope.

JOHN  
Okay, well... see you.

As John turns to leave Twinkle clears his throat again. John turns more impatiently to see Twinkle holding up a candy cane.

TWINKLE  
Candy cane?

John takes it out of Twinkle's hand quickly.

JOHN  
You bet. I hear they're delicious.

TWINKLE  
See you later John!

JOHN  
(mumbling)  
Not if I can help it.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP/JOHN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

John sits at his desk going over books while typing away at his calculator. Occasionally he attempts to tear his shirt.

JOHN  
What did he fix this with? Kevlar?

The door behind him swings open, scaring John silly, and in walks SANTA (1737). But not the Santa we are accustomed to seeing. Instead of his red suit and hat, he is wearing a Hawaiian shirt and shorts. He seems in a very jolly mood.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(surprised)  
Santa!  
(eyeing him over)  
Formal dress party today?

SANTA  
(laughing)  
Oh John. Nothing like that. The Missus and I have decided that I need a vacation.

JOHN  
(smiling)  
That's wonderful. You must be...

John's jaw nearly hits the floor. He tries to compose himself through his panic.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
You mean after Christmas right?  
Because going on vacation now would be crazy.

SANTA  
Oh not now!

John sighs in relief and smiles.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Tonight! Hawaii awaits! Beaches,  
resorts, hula dancers....

JOHN

You can't go now! Christmas is in  
less than a week. We need to  
organize! Prioritize! Organize...  
wait I said that!

(trying to compose  
himself)

There's lots to do. If you go now,  
there's no way you'll be ready in  
time for Christmas.

SANTA

That's fine. I was thinking of  
taking this Christmas off.

JOHN

Madness.

SANTA

It's been... what? Over 700 years  
since I didn't work the holiday. I  
think I'm owed one vacation.

JOHN

Then take New Years off. Wouldn't  
that be fun?

SANTA

Nope. It's been decided.

JOHN

The kids will be heartbroken.

Santa laughs merrily.

SANTA

Oh John. I'm not going to go on  
vacation without getting a  
replacement.

JOHN

You have a replacement?

SANTA

Well, not yet.

John looks at him in shock. Santa takes out a gadget from his  
pocket.

SANTA (CONT'D)

But not to worry. This here computer has picked out the perfect person to replace me for this year.

John is not impressed. He pushes a button on the so-called computer and a voice comes up.

COMPUTER VOICE

I am a puppy. Arf arf.

JOHN

That is a speak and spell sir. Unless you think a puppy is the perfect replacement.

Santa looks perturbed and puts the gadget away.

SANTA

Oh, I don't need some new fangled computer to tell me who I need to replace me. We didn't need computers in the old days.

JOHN

Yeah. That worked out really well the year you accidently gave Shaq that baseball mitt.

SANTA

Yeah. Oops.

(pause)

But I've been eyeing this guy since he was a kid. He's perfect. And I've picked you to get him ready!

JOHN

What!?

SANTA

You're going to train him. To be my replacement this year.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

John, now sitting in his elf suit, looks at the camera, stunned.



JOHN  
But.... But I'm an accountant.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP/JOHN'S OFFICE - MORNING

JOHN  
No.  
(pause)  
No. No. No. No. No. I've got lots to do here. Paperwork. It doesn't do itself! And inventory. We don't want to miss any children. Or cities even. No. I've got to stay here.

SANTA  
Afraid not. You're going to be going to Toronto Canada and training my replacement.

JOHN  
This is crazy, Santa! If you weren't going on vacation I'd tell you that you need a vacation. You're not thinking straight.

SANTA  
You'll be leaving this morning. Comet agreed to give you a lift. He was going there to see a Leaf's game anyway.

John holds his hand up to his mouth and coughs meekly.

JOHN  
Oh no. Bummer. It seems I'm coming down with a cold. It looks like you'll need to find someone else.

Santa turns and begins to leave.

SANTA  
Remember to have him ready by Christmas. Everyone's counting on you.

Santa has already left and closes the door behind him. As John leans back on his chair in shock he spills the coffee on his elf suit.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

John lets out a sheepish smile.

JOHN

So... looks like I'm going to  
Canada. I better practice saying  
eh. And hoser.

(quietly)

Can you help me get out of this?

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The alarm goes off showing it's 10:30 in the morning. RICK, an attractive, yet slovenly looking man in his late twenties turns it off and yawns. He hops out of bed and begins to get dressed in a dress shirt and pants. He leaves the bedroom whistling a happy song.

INT. RICK'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Rick enters the kitchen, still whistling, and pulls out a cold slice of pizza from the fridge and pops in into his mouth. As he eats he begins to shave himself with an electric razor he had in his pocket. He checks his calculator watch and realizes he's got to speed up. He quickly rushes into the front hall.

INT. RICK'S FRONT HALL - MORNING

Rick puts on his shoes hastily while chewing away on the pizza. He looks into the living room and sees John sitting on his couch.

RICK

(casually)

Howdy.

INT. RICK'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

John looks at Rick a little surprised.

JOHN

Hi.

INT. RICK'S FRONT HALL - MORNING

Rick is finished putting on his shoes and leaves.

EXT. RICK'S DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Rick reacts to the cold air and rushes to his car. He hits a button on his keys to unlock the door, but the trunk pops open. He rushes and closes it and then tries again, this time with success.

INT. RICK'S CAR - MORNING

Rick starts up the car and a rock song comes on the radio which he immediately starts singing along with regardless of not knowing the words. As he backs the car out of the driveway he stops and puts the car into drive and pulls back in. He shuts off the car and opens the door.

EXT. RICK'S DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Rick once again reacts to the cold weather as he approaches the house. He enters.

INT. RICK'S FRONT HALL - MORNING

Rick once again looks in the living room to see John still sitting on the couch. John gives him a smile.

RICK  
Who are you?

Rick then looks into the camera.

RICK (CONT'D)  
And why are you filming me?

INT. RICK'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

John looks relieved as Rick acknowledges his presence. Rick enters the living room as John stands up to explain himself.

JOHN  
It's a long story, and there's no way you're going to believe me, so I'm just going to get it over with and say it. I'm an elf who works for Santa Claus and I'm here to train you as his replacement.

Rick reacts like he can not believe what he is hearing. Then he smiles a little and John smiles nervously in return. Then Rick lets out a chuckle and John relaxes. Finally Rick lets out a hearty laugh and John laughs with him.

RICK

Right! I'm not falling for that one again.

John stops laughing and looks at Rick in confusion. He shakes his head and continues.

JOHN

Um. I anticipated a reaction like that... well, actually, nothing like that... but I thought you wouldn't believe me, so I thought I'd just cut to the chase.

John raises his hand, palm up, and in it appears a candy cane. He then takes the candy cane and throws it into the air, where it turns to snow. Next thing you know, it is snowing in Rick's living room. Rick looks at John with a happy smile.

RICK

Wow! You're a magician!

JOHN

What? No... as I mentioned previously, I'm an elf.

Rick folds his arms in disbelief and shakes his head.

RICK

Yeah. Right.

JOHN

Okay. Well how about this.

John looks around the room and finds a little piece of paper. From his front pocket he pulls out an oversized hammer and screwdriver. He begins to work on the paper with his tools until he reveals a toy train set.

RICK

Are you a wizard?

JOHN

(frustrated)

No! I'm an elf. From Santa's workshop! What is so hard to believe about....

(pause)

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Okay. It does seem ridiculous. But then explain this?

He takes Rick to the window and points outside. COMET, one of Santa's reindeer is waiting as John gives him the "ok" signal. Comet then flies off towards the sky. Rick is astonished.

RICK

You are a magician!

JOHN

Wow.

RICK

Do you know Cris Angel?

JOHN

Thankfully no.

RICK

Can you saw a lady in half?

JOHN

Not without jail time.

RICK

Do you have one of those fancy magician tuxedos? Can I wear it?

JOHN

I have an elf suit you're more than free to have.

RICK

(laughing)  
Yeah, right.

JOHN

What is wrong with you? What have you got against elves?

RICK

Like you have an elf suit.

John stomps over to his suitcase and opens it, revealing the gaudy looking, man sized, elf suit. Rick is flabbergasted.

RICK (CONT'D)

You weren't lying! You are an elf!  
Amazing!

John can not believe this is the man Santa has chosen as his replacement. He eyes Rick carefully.

RICK (CONT'D)

What's your name? No! Wait! Let me guess.

(thinking)

Bow Bow?

JOHN

I've been around elves my whole life and never have I heard of an elf being named Bow Bow. Haven't heard of anyone named Bow Bow for that matter. Is that even a name?

RICK

Stinky?

JOHN

No!

(pause)

Why?

RICK

Pudgy?

JOHN

Please stop guessing. It's John!  
John the elf.

Rick looks unimpressed.

RICK

John?

JOHN

Yeah. What's wrong with John?

RICK

Not very elfy.

JOHN

John is a perfectly good name for an elf.

RICK

Can I call you Johnny?

JOHN

You certainly can not.

RICK

(sadly)

Bummer.

JOHN

Well Rick isn't the bee knee's of names either. Can I call you Ricky?

RICK

(smiling)

Sure!

JOHN

Well, I'm not going to. Anyway, Santa has sent me here to train you to replace him this year. So, we really need to get started. We have lots of work to do if we're going to get you ready.

RICK

Awesome!

(pause)

Like what? Showing me how he gets down chimneys smaller than he is?

JOHN

Yeah. Though I don't have the faintest clue how he does that. So we'll figure it out amongst other things. So we best get crackin'.

RICK

No can do Johnny. I got to get to work.

JOHN

What? No. Christmas is just around the corner. You gotta call in sick or something. There's no way you'll be ready in time.

RICK

It's my last day before the holidays.

(pause)

Plus, I got to do something before I leave.

JOHN

(panicking)

Okay. This can work. I can get some research done while you're gone.

(suddenly happy)

Where do you work? I'll drop by on your lunch break and go over some things. This will work out perfectly.

Rick looks a little concerned.

RICK

Um. You can't drop by then. That's a bad time.

JOHN

I can't help but notice, for such a huge event as becoming Santa Claus' replacement, you sure are taking it in stride.

RICK

Oh. I played Santa Claus in my school play.

JOHN

Of course. That explains it.

RICK

But seriously Johnny...

JOHN

Really John is fine.

RICK

... it's important that I go to my last day of work. We can't all be elves eating candy canes and dancing through the strawberry river.

JOHN

You've known me for 5 minutes and can you seriously see me doing any of those things? Being an elf isn't as easy....

RICK

I gotta go. And maybe you should make it stop snowing now.

John notices that he and Rick are now up to their chests in snow. He nods, realizing his mistake and snaps his fingers. The snow stops. Rick muscles his way to the front hall.

RICK (CONT'D)

We'll have lots of time before Christmas comes. Just make yourself at home. And the shovel's in the garage.



Rick then zooms out the door leaving John standing amidst the snow filled living room, confused. He yanks out his cell phone, dials a number and puts it to his ear.

JOHN

(into phone)

44 Chestnut Lane? Are you sure that's the right address?

(pause)

It's just, I'd be hard pressed to consider this guy as a replacement for the block of wood that holds my office door open.

(pause)

Okay. And I don't need a candy cane to relax! I don't even like candy canes! What is it that people like even? It's not like you have one and go, "Oh wow! What an amazing taste!" There's a reason why people don't eat them all year long! What next? Christmas cakes in July.... Hello? Hello?

John hangs up the phone and begins to struggle through the snow to get out of the living room.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Behind a giant oak desk in an office overlooking the city, sits HENRY CASTLE (55), smiling smugly into the camera. He is well groomed and everything about him screams wealth. Rather obnoxiously.

CASTLE

Thank you for meeting me here in my office. It's so much nicer than your stuffy excuse for an interview room.

Castle sits back comfortably on his expensive chair and gloats.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

So, I've heard through the grapevine that Christmas this year is going to be a little different. That jolly ole St. Nick can't cut it. He needs a vacay. Typical. You don't get that obese without being a little lazy.

Castle stands up and looks out his office window at the stunning view of the city.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
Well, some of us don't mind a little hard work. In fact, we thrive on it.

Castle lets out a nefarious laugh and puts his hands behind his back.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
And now that Santa is on vacation, he's given me the perfect op...

A WINDOW WASHER suddenly swings in front of the window. Castle lets out a piercing scream and nearly hits the ceiling. He catches his breath and turns to the camera, laughing.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
(laughing)  
Oh my God! That was crazy! Did you see that. Oh! My! God! I though I was going to have a heart attack. First there was nothing... then suddenly... WHOA! Craaaazy!

Castle bends over, his laughter subsiding.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
Just let me catch my breath here. Whoa!

And just like that, Castle is back in full villain mode. He turns back towards the window, and then takes a step sideways as not to be staring directly at the window washer.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
When I was just a boy, Christmas was a tough day for me. I never got one present. Not one! Some nonsense about being a good boy.

Castle spins around and stares at the camera, maniacally.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
But now! Now it looks like I, Henry Castle, have the upper hand. As that oaf sips Margaritas on the beach, Castle and Castle will take over Christmas. Update it! Modernize it.

(MORE)

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
And get rid of those ridiculous  
rules like being a good person.

Castle turns back towards the window. Then steps sideways again to avoid staring directly at the window washer.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
Finally, the bad kids will be  
rewarded.  
(pause)  
And the good kids will be rewarded  
too! Poisonous snakes under the  
Christmas tree! A stocking full of  
tarantulas! And nice, colourful  
broken glass for the toddlers. It  
will be magnificent!

The window washer moves in front of Castle yet again. Castle sighs and turns back towards the camera.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
Buy I'm afraid you now know too  
much. Goodbye.

Castle pulls out a small remote and presses a button. A trap door in the floor opens quite a few feet away from the camera. Castle stares at the camera awkwardly for quite a long time.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Rick sits down on the interview chair, and places his mug of coffee on the armrest.

RICK  
So finding out I was going...

The coffee spills on his lap.

Rick screams in pain, causing the cameraman to scream and drop his sound equipment.

RICK (CONT'D)  
Let me get that for you.

As Rick attempts to pick up the sound recorder, he knocks over the camera, cracking the lens.

CUT TO:

## INT. HARDWICK'S/CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

A bunch of factory workers come into the cafeteria after a hard morning's work. Amongst them is Rick, walking with determination. He gets in line at the counter and before grabbing a tray, tries to smooth his hair back. Behind him, DUDLEY, a co-worker laughs. He is short and friendly looking. From his body language it is obvious he and Rick are friends.

DUDLEY

So, today's the big day? You finally going to ask her out?

RICK

Yeah! But don't talk about it. It'll make me nervous. And do you need to stand right behind me?

DUDLEY

I'm here for support.

As they near the front, the counter-person, HEATHER, spots Rick and smiles at him. She is roughly his age and is very pretty, in a wholesome, Hallmark Christmas movie, way.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

Not like you need it. She never smiles like that at anyone.

RICK

You're making me nervous.

DUDLEY

Okay. Okay. I'll go and sit at the table and you can just grab my lunch for me.

RICK

No way! She'll think I'm eating it all myself.

DUDLEY

And?

RICK

She'll think I'm pig!

DUDLEY

Oh dear. All right, I'll wait until you're done asking her out and then I'll grab my own lunch.

RICK  
Thanks Dudley. Your name should be  
Dudely!

Dudley turns to leave and give Rick a pat on the shoulder.

DUDLEY  
Good luck man.  
(conspiratorially)  
And if you get in good with her,  
maybe we can get extra cheese  
sticks!

Dudley exits and Rick nervously approaches Heather, who is waiting for him with a smile.

HEATHER  
Same as usual?

RICK  
(overly happy)  
You betcha!

Though most people on the face of the planet earth would find this weird behavior, Heather seems amused.

HEATHER  
Any big plans for Christmas?

RICK  
(nervously)  
Not much. Taking over for Santa.  
And having my sister and niece  
over.

HEATHER  
(laughing)  
You're hilarious. Make sure to say  
Merry Christmas to your niece for  
me.

RICK  
(laughing)  
You're hilarious too.

Heather looks quite confused by this comment.

RICK (CONT'D)  
I mean, what are you doing this  
Christmas? Any plans?

HEATHER  
Just visiting family. Nothing  
different from any other year.

Rick takes in a breath and gathers all his courage.

RICK

Well, I was thinking maybe we could do....

The moment is lost when out of nowhere John breaks into line in front of Rick. John looks like he is one step away from full on panic.

JOHN

Rick! Thank goodness I found you! I know you told me not to come today, but in researching I realized that if we are going to start the first step of training, I can give you some literature to read over your lunch!

Rick seems very confused at what to do. He smiles at John, but it's obviously hiding a look of menace.

RICK

Okay. Just leave them with me and I'll make sure to read them.

JOHN

Well, they're actually in the hall. You ever read Santa for Dummies? They make those books for everything! Also, why are there zombies in so many books? I don't remember Charles Dickens writing about zombies. Am I wrong?

Behind Rick the people in line are getting irritated with Rick taking so long.

RICK

Haven't read it, but I sure will.  
(whispering)  
You're cramping my style!

John has no clue what Rick is talking about. He takes out a pamphlet from his inner pocket.

JOHN

I also found this pamphlet at the library. It's got some interesting insights on....

One of the people in line get visibly upset.

MAN IN LINE

C'mon man! I don't want to eat my  
lunch on boxing day!

JOHN

Oh of course. I guess we should get  
a move on Rick.

Rick looks at Heather with a sad look in his eye and Heather gives him a reluctant smile.

RICK

Have a happy holiday.

Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a voice rises. It's Dudley.

DUDLEY

I think what my friend is trying to  
say is that he would like to have  
dinner with you over the holidays  
if that's okay with you!

Heather smiles, as Rick and John look at Dudley with surprise.

JOHN

Oh, I can see where you might get  
that impression, but I was actually  
showing Rick some pamphlets  
about....

DUDLEY

(irritated)  
Not you!

John finally realizes what was going on and looks very uncomfortable.

JOHN

Oh.

HEATHER

I would love to have dinner  
sometime.

Heather finally plops some mashed potatoes onto Rick's plate.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Just not at a cafeteria, okay?

Rick seems to think about this very seriously and eventually nods his head.

RICK

Deal!

MAN IN LINE

Okay love birds. Maybe now we can finally get something to eat.

DUDLEY

Hey, where's your Christmas spirit?

MAN IN LINE

Starving to death. Let's move!

HEATHER

We can talk later.

RICK

Okay! See you!

As the three guys walk away Rick smiles happily at Dudley.

RICK (CONT'D)

Thanks buddy.

DUDLEY

Anytime pal.

John suddenly realizes what has happened and begins to panic again.

JOHN

(to Rick)

Oh no! You can't go out on a date before Christmas. That will cut into your training time even more, and we're cutting it close as it is.

DUDLEY

And you are?

JOHN

(extending his hand)

Oh. John. Rick's friend.

DUDLEY

Rick's friend, who is telling him not to go on a date with the woman he's been pining after all year? That friend?

JOHN

(quietly)

Uh. Yeah. That'd be me.



DUDLEY

(shaking John's hand)  
Wish I could say it was nice to  
meet you.

RICK

Don't worry Dudley. He's a good  
guy. An elf actually. He's training  
me to take over for the position of  
Santa.

Dudley looks at Rick with some concern. John realizes how  
crazy this sounds and fakes a laugh.

JOHN

A mall Santa that is! That is the  
pamphlet I was showing him. They  
are looking for mall Santa's and  
Rick would be perfect.

DUDLEY

And you, John the elf, are training  
him?

JOHN

Oh yes. Mall Santa is a tough gig.  
Sitting down all day while  
delighted children tell you what  
they hope to get for Christ...  
(pause)  
It's harder than it sounds.

DUDLEY

(to Rick)  
Well, we all gotta take some extra  
work sometime. Nothing to be  
ashamed of. Especially with  
holidays.

RICK

Thanks. And are we still getting  
together over Christmas.

DUDLEY

The wife and kids are looking  
forward to it. Make sure to bring  
Patty and Susan.

RICK

They wouldn't miss it.

Dudley pats Rick on the shoulder and leaves.

DUDLEY

And good luck with Heather. She's a sweetheart.

And with that Dudley heads to his table to eat his food. Rick smiles at John happily.

RICK

Dudley's a great friend. You should go to his house too. They'd love you.

JOHN

Yeah. That's all well and good. But with your date and going to your friend's house, that's really not giving us any time to train.

RICK

Geez John. It's the holidays. Don't you have any friends you visit?

JOHN

Well. Most of my friends don't live around me. My being in the North Pole and all.

RICK

Man. That's a bummer. I don't know what I'd do without having a good friend like Dudely.

JOHN

Dudely? I thought it was Dudley.

RICK

Oh. That's a nickname I just came up with for him. Don't any of your friends have nicknames?

JOHN

Actually all of them do. There's Joker1245. And MarvelRulez55. Oh, and ShatnerIsGod22. He's a real card.

RICK

Those sound like names people use on a computer.

JOHN

They are. I don't know their real names or anything.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

We hang out on a message board for Science Fiction fans. It's a great spot. Great conversations about the newest movies, TV shows and comics. Indispensable really. Don't know what I'd do without it.

RICK

So you don't have any real friends?

JOHN

I just told you I have real friends. Computers are the future! One day there'll be no need to even leave your house.

RICK

Won't that kinda....be a bummer?

JOHN

Well, me and the other elves don't get on too much. They're all so...

John thinks of the right word to describe them.

JOHN (CONT'D)

...elfy. Always wanting to talk about toys. And eating candy canes!

RICK

Yum!

JOHN

Yes. Yum.

(pause)

It's just, I have different interests than them, so the computer helps by letting me find people with the same interests as me.

RICK

Yeah. But Dudley and I like all sorts of different things, but we still are friends.

JOHN

It's not that I don't like the other elves. They're great. I just would rather....

John can not think of anything to say as he racks his brain. He obviously does not consider himself anti-social.

RICK

Well, now you have a flesh and  
blood friend.

Rick give John a pat on the back which completely takes him  
by surprise.

JOHN

Great. But let's worry about making  
you Santa worthy right now.

John finally shows Rick the pamphlet.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It says here that the Woodbine Mall  
is looking for a Santa. This is  
great practice to get into the  
Christmas spirit! You can interact  
with the kids all day. It's  
perfect.

RICK

Sounds great. When is it?

JOHN

Tomorrow. So you're good?

RICK

Great. Looking forward to it!

JOHN

And Rick, maybe it's not a good  
idea to be telling people I'm one  
of Santa's elves.

RICK

So keep it a secret!

JOHN

Exactly.

RICK

A secret. Like when you're given a  
mission to impersonate a waiter to  
find out the secret ingredient in a  
restaurant's chicken?

JOHN

Kind of like that. Y'know Rick, I'm an elf who is the size of a full grown man, who does the books at Santa's workshop, and has been sent to recruit Santa's replacement, and I gotta say, you lead a very strange life.

And with that John and Rick leave the cafeteria....

CUT TO:

INT. HARDWICK'S/HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

...to see a pile of about 70 Christmas books piled up against the wall. John smiles and gives Rick a hearty pat on the back.

JOHN

So, out of all the books I read, these are the ones I consider important. Try and have them read before you get home.

Rick's jaw drops as he looks at the gigantic pile.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Oh, don't worry. I only gave you about a tenth of what I read. This should be a breeze.

(walking away)

See you after work.

When John has left, Rick shrugs and sits beside the pile of books and begins to read as fellow workers walk by.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

John smiles happily as he sits on the chair.

JOHN

So, it looks like this may all work out after all. Santa probably chose me to train his replacement because he could sense my people skills.

John crosses his legs and straightens himself out.

JOHN (CONT'D)

This reminds me of the time I had to train an intern at Santa's workshop in the ways of accounting. It's a tough job, and it's not for everyone. And I did not take it easy on him at all. And by the time he gets out of the institution, he should be one of the best accountants the North Pole has ever seen!

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Rick looks at the camera surprised. He gets up off his seat.

RICK

So that's it? You don't need me anymore?

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S FRONT HALL - EVENING

Rick walks into the front hall as John runs from the living room to greet him.

JOHN

So? How'd the reading go?

RICK

Not too well. So many words. Not enough pictures.

JOHN

Did you even get through one?

RICK

No, but I did practice getting into the Christmas spirit!

JOHN

(delighted)

Good! That's a great start! What did you do?

RICK

I gave the books away! Like presents! People loved em!

JOHN

What!? Those were library books.  
That's going to cost me a fortune!  
Can you get them back?

RICK

That's not very Christmas like. I  
can't just take them back. Santa  
wouldn't do that.

JOHN

It's just going to cost me a lot to  
replace them.

RICK

You're being very elfish.

It takes a moment for John to realize Rick has attempted a  
joke. Rick laughs.

JOHN

Instead of selfish.

RICK

You got it!

JOHN

I certainly did. Now, let's eat.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S KITCHEN - EVENING

They both enter the kitchen where John has prepared an  
elaborate feast that's spread out on the table appetizingly.  
Rick looks at John with suspicion.

RICK

Did you eat my pizza in the fridge?

JOHN

God no. The cockroaches seemed to  
be doing a good enough job with  
that.

RICK

I would have been fine if you did.  
You didn't have to go to all this  
trouble.

JOHN

No trouble at all. And besides,  
I've got to fatten you up.

RICK  
Not before my date!

JOHN  
Look. If you're going to be Santa,  
you need to look like him as well.

RICK  
Are people going to see me?

JOHN  
Not if I train you well enough. You  
should go by unnoticed.

RICK  
So why do I need to look like him?

JOHN  
Okay. Let's say a kid does spot  
you. Instead of being filled with  
delight at seeing Santa, he'll  
instead be traumatized for life by  
seeing a guy with pizza stains on  
his shirt stuffing his stocking.

RICK  
I'll wear padding underneath the  
suit. I won't gain weight before  
seeing Heather.

JOHN  
Oh, for the love of all.... Okay.  
You'll wear padding. Least of our  
worries anyway.

A knock is heard at the door and Rick turns excitedly towards  
it.

RICK  
A surprise visit!

Rick runs out of the kitchen to answer the door as John rolls  
his eyes.

JOHN  
If I ever need a stick retrieved I  
know who to call.

John eventually follows Rick out to the hallway and stops  
dead when he sees...



INT. RICK'S FRONT HALL - EVENING

... Rick's sister SUSAN (32) stands at the door smiling as Rick grabs her daughter PATTY (8) and raises her above his head.

RICK  
(happily)  
Who's my most favourite niece?

SUSAN  
Be careful Rick.

RICK  
Don't worry. I don't have pizza  
grease on my hands this time.

Susan looks a little concerned.

SUSAN  
Still...

John sees Susan and is instantly smitten. He smiles awkwardly at her, but she is too preoccupied by Rick swinging her offspring around. John approaches Susan nervously, making his way past Rick who is still swinging around Patty. Susan finally notices him and gives him a smile.

JOHN  
Hi....

John is thrown into the air as Patty's feet connect with his face. He flies backward into the kitchen where a loud CRASH is heard. John screams in a very unmanly manner and staggers out of the kitchen, covered in food. In a very undignified way he attempts to take a whole turkey off his arm that he has managed to get elbow deep into. His eyes open wide in pain though when he finally feels the gravy that has spilled onto his pants burning through to his unmentionables.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Hot!

John begins to tear off his pants in front of the shocked mother and child, showing his underwear that is also covered in gravy. Unfortunately, it looks like they are covered in something else brown and runny.

PATTY  
Ewwwwww.

John looks down at what Patty's referring to and tries to smile at her reassuringly.

JOHN

Oh, no. That's not what it  
seems....

Some of the cranberry sauce that was on his head begins to run down into his eyes and when he attempts to wipe it off he clocks himself in the face with the, still attached to his hand, turkey. He plummets to the floor in pain.

Rick looks a little off as he turns in John's direction.

RICK

Man, I'm dizzy.

The light fixture hanging above John becomes detached and crashes onto him. He lies on the floor, moaning.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The group sit on the couch eating take out pizza. John looks much worse of the wear, but he has cleaned himself up.

PATTY

This pizza's great.

RICK

I know! I eat it every day!

Susan stops eating and looks over at Rick in a concerned manner.

SUSAN

Really Rick? I don't think that's  
very healthy.

RICK

I always make sure there's a  
vegetable on it.

SUSAN

That's not....

RICK

And before you say it, tomato sauce  
counts!

John still seems quite taken with Susan and tries to seem like he is casually interrupting.

JOHN  
 (loud and aggressively)  
 So, you're John's sister?

SUSAN  
 Noooo. I'm Rick's sister though.

JOHN  
 (laughing)  
 Ha. That's what I meant. I'm always  
 getting me and Rick confused.

SUSAN  
 Really?  
 (pause)  
 Are you feeling all right? That was  
 quite a blow to the head you took.

JOHN  
 I'm fine. I'm always blowing  
 myself...

John realizes what he is saying and looks appalled. Without  
 hesitation he jumps up and sprints out of the room. The three  
 listen to him running up the stairs and slamming a door.

SUSAN  
 (to Rick)  
 So, John is a friend of yours?

RICK  
 (suspiciously)  
 Yeeeeeeessssss. John is a friend of  
 mine.

SUSAN  
 How come I've never heard of him?

RICK  
 Weeeelllllllllll, we just met.

SUSAN  
 Really? Where did you meet?

RICK  
 Weeeeeeeeeeee meeeeeetttttttt.....

SUSAN  
 Okay, enough Rick. You're the worst  
 liar in the world. Who is this John  
 fellow?

Rick looks worried. In a panic he grabs his knee.

RICK  
 (loudly)  
 Owww. My knee! I think I pulled something.

SUSAN  
 Only an idiot would fall for that....

The three hear the door open and a pair of feet running down the stairs. John enters into the room in a panic.

JOHN  
 Your knee! What's wrong? Are you going to be all right?

Susan sees John's concern and is a little taken aback.

SUSAN  
 You two aren't.... You know?

John and Rick look at each other in confusion.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
 ...together?

JOHN  
 In the same room?

SUSAN  
 No, I mean "together".

RICK  
 Like we're cool? We got it together?

John likes this interpretation and smiles at Rick who gives him a smile back.

SUSAN  
 No. Gay.

John and Rick are still attempting to put the pieces together in their head. Susan sighs.

PATTY  
 Gay. Homosexual.

RICK  
 (laughing)  
 No, he's an elf.  
 (pause)  
 However....

SUSAN

Elf?

JOHN

No! Not elf.  
 (thinking)  
 Self. Self help.

John's eyes go wide as he has a Eureka moment.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm Rick's personal trainer.  
 (pause)  
 His live in personal trainer.  
 That's why I was so concerned about  
 his knee. It's been bothering him.  
 That also explains why I live here.  
 In fact that explains a lot. I'm  
 his personal trainer. And I like  
 you.... Girls. I like girls. Not  
 guys.

John hopes he managed to cover up his flub, but Rick looks over at him in horror.

RICK

So you hate guys!? I thought I was  
 your friend, dude!?

SUSAN

(to John)  
 A personal trainer?  
 (to Rick)  
 When could you afford a personal  
 trainer?

RICK

Um, weeeelllllll.....

JOHN

It's through work. He hurt his knee  
 on the job so I'm here to make sure  
 he gets back on his feet.

RICK

(catching on)  
 And to work on my gluts.

SUSAN

His gluts?

JOHN  
(sighing)  
Yes. His employers are very  
concerned about his gluts.

RICK  
And abs.

SUSAN  
So, what kind of regime do you  
have?

JOHN  
(confused)  
It's a Prime Minister here, isn't  
it?

SUSAN  
Fitness regime.

JOHN  
Oh. Knee bends mostly.

RICK  
And high kicks. Check this out!

Rick gets up and performs a very unimpressive high kick while  
making a big show out of it.

SUSAN  
(to John)  
Impressive.

JOHN  
I... I have my work cut out for me.

John notices that Patty has not been saying much, just  
quietly eating her pizza. He gives her a friendly smile.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
So, Patty, how old are you?

PATTY  
Eight.

JOHN  
Any big plans for Christmas this  
year?

PATTY  
No.

JOHN  
Anything special you want from  
Santa?

PATTY  
(sadly)  
I don't want anything.

John seems taken aback by Patty's unenthusiastic response and looks over to Rick. Rick gives John a kind smile and shakes his head to gesture for him not to continue with the questions.

Susan gives Patty a pat on her hand.

SUSAN  
I'm sure we'll have a nice  
Christmas this year.

PATTY  
I have to go to the bathroom.

Patty gets up without ceremony and heads out of the room. Rick sits back down on the couch, looking the most serious we have seen him so far.

RICK  
Still isn't over it, eh?

SUSAN  
No, she's worst over the holidays  
though.

Susan notices John's confusion at Patty's behaviour.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
(to John)  
Patty's dad, my ex-husband, left a  
couple years ago and moved to  
Florida after the divorce. He used  
to write or call Patty, but that  
has become less and less frequent.  
Last year he never even sent a  
Christmas card.

John is appalled.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
With all the festivities around  
Christmas, I think that's the worst  
time for her. Seeing other families  
together. It really reminds her of  
what she's lost.

JOHN

That's awful. But are you sure he's okay? Maybe he can't write or...

RICK

No, he's fine. If you wanna call it that. Patty's unfortunately his Facebook friend and sees him having the time of his life.

SUSAN

He's not a great guy.

(pause)

But, Patty loves him.

JOHN

I should apologize.

SUSAN

You didn't mean anything by it. Might be better not to bring it up again.

Patty walks back into the room and the adults do their best to act innocent.

RICK

So, I sure do like that sport's team we were just speaking of.

JOHN

Yes. They do good at... sports.

PATTY

Mom, I'd like to go home now.

Susan gets up and starts to gather her things.

SUSAN

Of course. It's getting late.

(remembering)

Oh yeah, what I came here to ask!

(to Rick)

Can we be expecting you Christmas morning?

RICK

You betcha! Can John come too?

JOHN

Uh, Rick. My work on your gluts will be done by then. I'll be back home.



RICK  
Doing what?

JOHN  
Well, there's a lot of work to be done after Christmas. Just because it's over doesn't mean that it's vacation time. There's calculations, error reports...

SUSAN  
Don't you have family?

JOHN  
Well, not really. I kind of have a dad, but he'll be on vacation.

RICK  
You're coming.

SUSAN  
I'll set an extra spot at the dinner table. You're more than welcome.

John gets that dazed look in his eyes as he sees Susan smiling, inviting him over.

JOHN  
Uh, maybe I can make it.

SUSAN  
Great!  
(pause)  
Well, see you soon then.

As they exit, Patty looks back at Rick and John, and musters up a smile.

JOHN  
They seem nice.

RICK  
They're the best.

JOHN  
I'm sure one day off won't send everything into chaos.

CUT TO:

INT. WOODBINE MALL - DAY

Kids are screaming and having tantrums as frazzled parents try to calm them in a busy mall. There is a huge lineup for meeting Santa and many of the kids are getting impatient.

CUT TO:

INT. WOODBINE MALL/BACKROOM - DAY

John peeks out a door at the lineup in terror. He turns to Rick, trying to hide his nervousness.

JOHN

Looks like a good turnout.

Rick can hear the screams of children and looks very wary.

RICK

The mall isn't on fire, is it?

JOHN

No, no. Those are the gleeful screams of excitement.

The door crashes open and the previous DEPARTMENT STORE SANTA comes barreling in.

DEPARTMENT STORE SANTA

It's chaos. Every Santa for himself!

He begins to tear off his Santa uniform, not being able to get it off fast enough.

DEPARTMENT STORE SANTA (CONT'D)

Monsters! Little monsters!

He hands the outfit to a shocked Rick, who gulps and looks at John. The Department Store Santa, now in his street clothes, rips his wallet out of his pocket and pulls out a 30 day chip.

DEPARTMENT STORE SANTA (CONT'D)

(disgusted)

Get this thing away from me!

He throws the chip as far as he can and rushes out of the room. Rick's eyes are wide with horror. John forces a smile and rubs his hands together.

JOHN

Exciting!

RICK  
I'm not going out there!

JOHN  
Oh, come on. They're just kids.

Rick shakes his head and crosses his arms, refusing to budge.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
And besides, I'll be out there with you.

RICK  
(cheerfully)  
Really?

JOHN  
Of course. I'm Santa's elf after all.

RICK  
(frowning)  
But where's your outfit?

JOHN  
What?  
(pause)  
Oh, that. I don't need it.

RICK  
How can you be an elf if you don't wear the outfit.

JOHN  
Look, an outfit doesn't define an elf. The modern elf doesn't need to be shackled down by clothes, clearly not only out of date, but when you think of it, quite silly.

RICK  
All right. Then I don't need to wear this.

Rick casually tosses the Santa outfit aside and begins to head out.

JOHN  
Well, that's not the case. You do need to wear...

RICK  
If you don't have to, neither do I.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

John is unhappily wearing his elf suit again.

CUT TO:

INT. WOODBINE MALL - DAY

John stands at the beginning of the line sporting his elf suit. Rick, in full Santa regalia sits down on the red chair. John unchains the barrier and the KID #1 comes shooting through. Though quite overweight, it does not slow him down one bit.

RICK  
(loudly)  
Ho! Ho!  
(seeing Kid #1)  
No!

Kid #1 jumps onto Rick's lap as Rick gasps in pain.

John stifles a laugh. Looking in line he sees none other than Susan and Patty waiting to see Santa. Taken aback, he composes himself and heads towards the two.

JOHN  
Hello there!

Susan and Patty seem wary as the elf approaches them, but once they recognize John, Susan smiles brightly.

SUSAN  
John!  
(pause)  
What are you doing here?

JOHN  
(delaying)  
Well, that's a good question.  
(pause)  
What brings you here?

SUSAN  
Thought it might be good for Patty to see Ole Saint Nick. So you are an elf after all?

JOHN  
 (defiantly)  
 NO!  
 (pause)  
 Yes.

In the background, Rick gently takes Kid #1 off of his lap and walks away. Kid #1 stands confused as "Santa" leaves.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 You know, getting into the holiday spirit. I volunteered to help out this year.

SUSAN  
 Well, that's very nice of you. How sweet.

JOHN  
 Um, well....

John goes in close to Susan so Patty won't be able to overhear.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 (quietly)  
 Well, actually your brother is helping too.

SUSAN  
 Really, where is he?

In the background Rick returns with a brand new fire truck that he hands the thrilled Kid #1. He gives him a rub on the head and sits back down. Kid #1 rushes off happily.

John notices that there is no kid on Santa's lap and turns to Susan.

JOHN  
 Sorry, one minute!

John rushes to the head of the line and unlocks the barrier letting KID #2 in. As soon as the excited kid heads towards Rick, John makes his way back towards Susan.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 (to Susan)  
 Actually, that's him up there.

He points towards Rick, lifting Kid #2 onto his lap.

SUSAN  
 (concerned)  
 Doesn't he have a bad knee? Should  
 he be doing that?

JOHN  
 Um, well, it's actually part of his  
 exercise regime. You know, along  
 with being in the holiday spirit.

In the background, Rick lifts Kid #2 off of his lap and  
 disappears again.

SUSAN  
 Oh.

JOHN  
 (quietly)  
 But, you know, is it okay if Patty  
 goes up and finds out that Rick is  
 playing Santa? Won't she recognize  
 him? Maybe you should come another  
 day.

In the background, Rick appears holding a massive doll house  
 and an easy bake oven. The delighted Kid #2 takes it and  
 meets her shocked parents on the other side.

RICK  
 (loudly)  
 Ho! Ho! Ho!

This grabs John's attention and he rushes forward and lets  
 Kid #3 in. He high tails it back to Susan.

JOHN  
 So surely, you can see the  
 conundrum here?

SUSAN  
 No, not at all. It's amazing that  
 Rick's Santa. What a special treat  
 for her.

In the background Rick is bringing Kid #3 a pony and a video  
 game console. He is getting a little out of breath from  
 having to keep running to the store.

JOHN  
 (to himself)  
 Actually, it will be a good test to  
 see if he stays in character. If he  
 can...

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(noticing Kid #3 with  
presents)  
... well, I should have expected  
this.

John rushes towards Rick as the kids are getting more anxious  
to be let in.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(to Rick)  
What are you doing?

RICK  
I'm Santa. I'm getting the kids  
what they want.

John dips his head sadly.

JOHN  
How did you afford this?

RICK  
Well, you kept your wallet in the  
clothes you just changed outta, so  
I just grabbed the credit card.

JOHN  
With that and the library books....

John turns towards the lineup of children.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(loudly)  
Sorry kids, Santa's all out of  
money today. You'll have to wait  
until Christmas.

An ANGRY MOTHER steps in front of the line.

ANGRY MOTHER  
Those other children got presents!  
Does Santa HATE our children?

JOHN  
No. No. Of course not. He just ran  
out of money.

The angry mother turns to the line of children behind her.

ANGRY MOTHER  
Sorry children, Santa HATES all of  
you.

The lineup of children begin to cry.

RICK  
 (confused)  
 Just out of curiosity, what part of  
 "Christmas Spirit" is this?

John looks defeated.

JOHN  
 The part where I have to get a  
 second job this year.

John turns to the lineup of crying kids with a big smile.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Just joshing kids. Us elves are so  
 mischievous.

The kids cheer and John does manage a smile, seeing them so  
 happy.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

John holds an old Mr. Spock action figure.

JOHN  
 ... and as you can see, it's still  
 in it's original packaging so  
 you're actually getting a really  
 great bargain..

CUT TO:

INT. WOODBINE MALL - DAY

The lineup of kids has grown and Rick waves the next child  
 up. Patty walks towards Rick unhappily and sits on his lap.

RICK  
 Ho ho ho. Have you been a good girl  
 this year?

PATTY  
 (moping)  
 Well, if it isn't ole St. Rick.

RICK  
 Ha ha ha. I don't know who this  
 Rick fellow is, but he sounds aces.  
 I am Santa Claus of the North Pole.  
 (MORE)



RICK (CONT'D)  
Now, what would you like for  
Christmas?

PATTY  
I haven't told you if I've been  
good yet.

Rick pulls down his beard and smiles at Patty.

RICK  
It's me Pats. And I know you've  
been the best!

Rick pulls the beard back up and gets back into character.

RICK (CONT'D)  
So what is it you want, stranger?

PATTY  
I don't care. I don't like  
Christmas.

RICK  
But I'm Santa this year!

PATTY  
Yeah, you're doing a great job too  
Uncle Rick. The kids seem really  
happy. But I gotta go.

RICK  
Wait! I mean I'm really Santa. And  
John is really an elf!

PATTY  
I'm not a baby Uncle Rick.

JOHN  
He knows magic! I saw it.

PATTY  
That's great Uncle Rick. I need to  
go now.

Patty jumps off of Rick's lap and heads back to her mom.

RICK  
(frustrated)  
You'd believe me if I was a kid!

Before Rick can wave goodbye to his sister and niece, a full  
grown BUSINESSMAN (30s) sits on his lap.

BUSINESSMAN

A porche and a private jet. And  
snap to it, I haven't got all day.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - AFTERNOON

Castle stands in a nearly empty warehouse room, barely able to contain his excitement. There is an expensive chair set up in the middle of the room, and very little else. Castle gives his most charming smile to the camera.

CASTLE

So glad you could make it to the  
unveiling. I trust you found the  
place okay?

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)

Well, I...

CASTLE

So without further ado, let me  
introduce our new Santa Claus...

Castle extends his arms and clears his throat before the big announcement.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

(loudly)

Jimmy!

A tall, handsome man in his twenties walks up beside Castle. He is dressed in a very expensive suit and looks incredibly well groomed. However, he seems jittery and is sniffing and wiping his nose an awful lot. This is JIMMY.

JIMMY

Yo. How you doin'?

CASTLE

(smiling)

Enough of the chit chat. Let's get  
started.

Jimmy struts towards the chair as Castle motions to a stunning MODEL to open the door to the warehouse.

A meek looking CHILD (7) walks in slowly. Jimmy gets annoyed.

JIMMY

C'mon kid!

The nervous child picks up his pace and gets to Jimmy. He attempts to sit on Jimmy's lap.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
(angry)  
OH!

He throws his hands into the air dramatically.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
What you doin' kid. This suit costs  
more than your family's lives.

The Child looks as if he is going to start crying.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Just stand there kid.  
(pause)  
Now, have you been a good boy this  
year.

The Child nods his head, still upset.

Jimmy leaps from the chair, furiously.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
What! Who let this kid in here?

The Child is terrified. Jimmy takes out a butterfly knife and starts flicking it around in his hand.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Someone betta get this kid out a  
here! I'm losing my temper!

The Child runs out, screaming, right past another BOY (6) who has been waiting. Castle looks pleased as punch.

CASTLE  
You're next. Go see Santa Claus.

The Boy slowly begins to walk towards Jimmy. Once he sees the impatient look on Jimmy's face he speeds up.

JIMMY  
(smiling)  
So kid, you been a good boy this  
year?

The Boy thinks before answering.

BOY  
(nervously)  
No.

Jimmy is elated.

JIMMY

Nice!

He bends down and squeezes the boy's cheeks.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Good for you kid!

(pause)

What you do?

BOY

Um.. Well... I didn't listen to my  
mom one time.

Jimmy looks at the boy with scrutiny. He is not impressed.

JIMMY

Yeah?

BOY

And I lied a couple times...

Jimmy is visibly getting angry.

JIMMY

Yeah?

The boy senses trouble. He thinks carefully.

BOY

And I beat up some guy.

Jimmy smiles from ear to ear.

JIMMY

What? A guy? Like a full grown man?

BOY

Yup.

Jimmy looks over at Castle.

JIMMY

This kid!

(to the Boy)

What he do?

BOY

Uh.. He said he liked being nice to  
people.

Jimmy can't believe what he's hearing. He turns around and kicks his chair, which flies into the wall.

JIMMY

What's his name? Tell me his name!

The Boy is getting very nervous now.

BOY

Uh. The Easter Bunny.

Jimmy is furious now.

JIMMY

Noooo!

He takes out his butterfly knife and starts stabbing his chair in a frenzy. The boy is paralyzed with fear.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

No! No! No!

Jimmy finally calms himself down. He straightens his suit and walks up to the boy. He reaches into the inside of his jacket and the boy gasps.

Jimmy pulls out a piece of black licorice and gives it to him.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Here's some licorice, kid. Happy Christmas.

The Boy walks out past Castle, who could not be prouder. He turns to the cameraman with a grin.

CASTLE

Great, isn't he?

Suddenly, Castle gets serious and looks at the camera disapprovingly.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

But I'm afraid I've shown you too much.

He pulls out a remote control from his pocket.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Goodbye, my friend.

He presses a button and a safe falls from the ceiling quite a few feet away from him and the cameraman. Castle looks very uncomfortable. He suddenly perks up.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

My phone.

He answers his phone that has not rung and pretends to talk to someone as the cameraman turns and walks towards the door.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

John sits uncomfortably in his chair.

JOHN

Yeah. So the whole Santa training thing is working pretty good. Rick seems to be getting the hang of things.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM/RICK'S HOUSE - DAY

Rick is wearing an oversized Santa outfit while John sits on his bed, wearing PJs. Rick has a big sack of presents hoisted over his shoulder.

JOHN

So the trick of this is, you need to enter without waking anyone up, put the presents under the tree and then make your way out just as quietly.

RICK

Easy.

JOHN

Now I'm just going to relax up here and I shouldn't even notice as you come and go. Good luck.

RICK

So, the chimney?

JOHN

Considering there is no chimney here, no.

(pause)

The front door should suffice. Until I figure out how Santa gets into homes without a chimney. I haven't got the faintest clue.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

(pause)

This is to test your stealth. You need to be fast and silent, like a cat.

RICK

What kind of cat?

JOHN

I don't know.

RICK

What?

JOHN

I mean a tabby. A tabby cat.

RICK

Got it!

Rick exits the room, barely able to contain his excitement.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

JOHN

We still need to work on a couple things, but for the most part, he is nailing it.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM/RICK'S HOUSE - DAY

John puts his head on the pillow, closes his eyes and relaxes.

JOHN

(sadly)

And here it comes.

He hears the front door handle jiggling loudly, followed by a number of loud bangs. Next, he can hear the door being kicked open as Rick obviously falls in.

RICK (O.S.)

(loudly and in pain)

Aaaaaaah!

John listens as Rick moans and groans for a while longer. Finally it seems as if Rick has collected himself.

RICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(quietly)  
C'mon Rick. You can do this.

Next John hears the ornaments on the Christmas tree breaking and a large thud. Rick starts screaming, as more loud thuds can be heard. John rolls over as glass starts breaking and the house alarm goes off. The sound of firecrackers going off fills the downstairs. Rick continues screaming.

John gets up and heads out of the room angrily.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

John enters the room, barely avoiding being run over the pack of wild dogs running out. He finds Rick lying motionless on the floor. Rick looks up to him with disappointment.

RICK  
You said a Tabby, right?

John turns to leave but trips over Rick's gift bag. The light fixture hanging above him falls on him once again.

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S KITCHEN - DUSK

It's the night of Rick's big date with Heather. He is dressed moderately well, considering we have mostly seen him in a t-shirt. John smiles as he brushes some lint off of Rick's shoulder.

RICK  
How do I look?

JOHN  
Like a million bucks. You're gonna sweep her off her feet.

Rick smiles and puts on his jacket.

RICK  
Hope Heather likes the restaurant.

JOHN  
I don't think it will matter much.  
I'm sure she's there for the company.



RICK  
You think she likes one of the  
waiters?

JOHN  
No.  
(pause)  
You.

RICK  
I've never met any of the waiters.  
Are they nice there...  
(shaking his head)  
No. This night is about Heather.

JOHN  
(sighing)  
Good luck.

RICK  
Thanks pal.

Rick heads towards the front door, but turns around before leaving.

RICK (CONT'D)  
Oh yeah. Since you won't be dining  
with me tonight, I told my sister  
you will have dinner with them.  
They expect you there around six.

JOHN  
What!?

Rick's usual daft look turns serious for a moment.

RICK  
And John, I was wondering, you  
know... you can do all this magic  
and stuff, and Patty just hates  
this time of year... could we maybe  
tell her?

John thinks about this for a moment, obviously ready to say no. As he goes to speak up, he stops himself. Suddenly he smiles.

JOHN  
I can't see what harm it will do.  
For sure, we can tell her.

He reaches into one of his pockets.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Maybe I can even give her a bit of  
a sneak preview tonight.

He pulls out an oversized candy cane from his pocket that is  
as big as a Christmas tree. Rick is overjoyed.

RICK  
She loves candy canes!

JOHN  
(smiling)  
Yeah. They're all right.  
(pause)  
Good luck tonight. And I'll be at  
your sister's by six.

Rick exits, happily. John, now in a great mood, goes to get  
ready, forgetting he is holding a giant candy cane. It hooks  
on to the bookcase, pulling it down on top of him.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Heather and Rick sit in a booth at a nice restaurant. Judging  
from the empty plates in front of them, they have already  
finished eating.

HEATHER  
(smiling)  
So, you're Santa?

RICK  
Just this year.

Heather leans back and shakes her head.

HEATHER  
You know Rick, I already like you.  
You don't have to make up stories.

RICK  
I'm not making it up... well the  
part about Santa begging me to take  
over I may have slightly  
exaggerated, but he did pick me out  
of everyone.

HEATHER  
Isn't Santa... you know, make  
believe.

RICK

No! Parents just lie to their kids  
as they get older to take all the  
credit.

HEATHER

(thinking)

Geez. You know, I think I liked it  
better thinking they lied to me  
when I was little to make me  
happy.

RICK

But that's not true. They are  
filthy liars now!

Rick notices Heather's shocked reaction.

RICK (CONT'D)

And I'm sure they are wonderful  
filthy liars who I hope to get to  
meet one day.

Heather laughs and a WAITER shows up with their desert. He  
places it down in front of them.

WAITER

One chocolate brownie piece of cake  
for the lady and one... worms and  
dirt for the gentleman.

RICK

(seriously)

And, because I ordered from the  
children's menu, am I entitled to a  
toy?

WAITER

Yes you are.

RICK

Yes! I'll have the boat... no! The  
top.

Heather laughs as the waiter leaves to get Rick his toy. Rick  
watches the waiter as he leaves.

RICK (CONT'D)

(to himself)

He's not all that.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Castle sits behind his desk as Jimmy stands next to him, obediently. Castle leans towards the cameraman, happily.

CASTLE

So, I hear from my mole at the North Pole that jolly ole St. Nick has found a replacement of his own. Some dunderhead name Rick something or other. This will not do.

JIMMY

No sir.

Castle stands up and Jimmy pushes back in his chair.

CASTLE

What do you think of this situation, Jimmy?

JIMMY

I ain't worried. You'll take care of this, boss.

CASTLE

You are correct once again my stereotypical friend. For I already have a plan formulated.

Castle turns dramatically towards the camera, but knocks his cup of brandy off his desk. He is quite shocked when the glass breaks and lets out a high pitched yell. This causes Jimmy to yell too.

Both Castle and Jimmy break out laughing, barely able to contain themselves. Wiping the tears from his eyes, Castle turns back to the camera.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Oh brother. The World's Clumsiest Villain Award goes to...

(calming down)

Let's do that again. This time I'll try not to mess it up.

JIMMY

"Try".

CASTLE

Stop it Jimmy, you're going to get me laughing again.

Castle lets out one last guffaw and straightens himself out. He spins towards the camera with a menacing look in his eyes.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
 Because I've found out this Rick dodo has a niece he just adores. And tonight...

Castle extends his hand towards the camera and closes it into a fist.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
 ... me and Jimmy take her. And if this Rick dodo... no, I've already used that... idiot brain wants her back in one piece, he steps aside and lets Jimmy and me take over Christmas. People will love it so much, the real Santa will have to go on unemployment. Because no one will want him back!

Castle pulls out a remote control from his pocket and smiles.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
 But you won't be telling my plan to anyone. Because you, my friend, will be dead!

Castle pushes the button on the remote control. His empty chair shoots up into the ceiling. Castle is appalled at this.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
 Now who thought that this would be a good idea? Nincompoops!

CUT TO:

INT. SUSAN'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

John sits next to Susan at the dinner table while Patty sulks. John tries to lighten the mood.

JOHN  
 Hey Patty, you ever hear the one about the cow born with no ears?

PATTY  
 (gloomily)  
 No.

JOHN  
 Well, neither has the cow.

Crickets chirp.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Are crickets still around in  
winter?

PATTY  
I'm going to go to my room now.

SUSAN  
Okay, honey.

Patty gets up and exits.

JOHN  
Wow. That joke usually kills.

SUSAN  
It's not you. She still hasn't  
heard from her dad.

JOHN  
Oh. I'm sorry.

SUSAN  
Don't apologize. It's not your  
fault.

JOHN  
No. I'm just sorry she is so sad.

Susan sits back.

SUSAN  
Yeah. Me too.

John suddenly has a mischievous grin.

JOHN  
I think I just may know something  
that might cheer her up a little.

SUSAN  
I don't know, John. I think maybe  
she'd just rather be left alone  
right now.

JOHN  
You don't think she'd be impressed  
by this?

John reaches into his inside pocket and pulls out a kitten.

SUSAN  
That's adorable.

Suddenly the kitten gets freaked out and digs it's claws into John's arm, causing him to scream and fall off his chair. The cat can be heard attacking John and the pitcher of gravy on the table falls onto him.

Susan helps John up, who's face is now covered with scratches.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
I don't know John. I don't think  
seeing a kitten attack you will  
cheer her up.

JOHN  
(nodding)  
Good point.

Through his pain he reaches into his pocket yet again.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
But how about this?

He pulls out an oversized BUNNY from his pocket, which he places on the table. The bunny gives an animated smile and sings "We Wish You a Merry Christmas".

SUSAN  
I don't know John. Maybe Patty just  
wants to be left alone. I'm sure  
she'd enjoy it later though.

John is confused.

JOHN  
Um... aren't you a little  
impressed?

SUSAN  
Oh yeah. That's great John. It's  
your elf powers isn't it?

JOHN  
(surprised)  
You know I'm an elf?

SUSAN  
Yeah. Rick told me. He's terrible  
at keeping secrets.

JOHN

And you just accept... you know, it  
isn't weird...

(pause)

You are a peculiar family.

Suddenly, they hear glass breaking upstairs and Patty lets  
out a scream.

SUSAN

Patty!

Her and John race upstairs, revealing the huge gravy stain on  
the back of John's pants.

The bunny that was still singing in the BG looks at John in  
disgust.

BUNNY

Ugh. Show some pride man!

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S CAR - NIGHT

Rick drives as Heather stares out the window.

HEATHER

It's a beautiful night.

RICK

It sure is.

HEATHER

I had a really nice time.

Rick looks nervous and smiles.

RICK

Me too. I really hope we can do it  
again sometime.

Heather laughs.

HEATHER

I'd love to.

Rick is overjoyed. He looks at her happily.

RICK

There's a restaurant up ahead that  
I heard is pretty great!



HEATHER

Um... I didn't mean tonight.  
Besides, I'm pretty full.

RICK

I'm sorry. I just am having such a  
great time. I don't want the night  
to end.

Heather turns to Rick, giving a flirtatious smile.

HEATHER

Well. It doesn't have to.

RICK

That's awesome! John the elf is  
hanging out at my sister's place!  
We can go there!

Rick now drives happily as Heather looks disappointed.

HEATHER

Yes. That is what I meant.

(pause)

Let's hang out with your sister.

CUT TO:

INT. PATTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John and Susan race in to see the window broken and Patty is  
nowhere in sight. Susan runs to the broken window.

SUSAN

Oh my God! Patty!

John searches around the room and finds nothing. Susan yells  
out the window.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Patty! Where are you?!

Susan looks like she is going to go in hysterics. All of the  
sudden, the cameraman clears his throat.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)

Um. Uh. I might know what happened  
to her.

John turns to the cameraman in desperation.

JOHN

What, man? Speak up.

CAMERAMAN

Um well, I don't know whether I should. I believe it was Dryer who said that the documentarian and subjects should never interact. It destroys the facet of being an observer and the documentary becomes null and void once the observer interacts. I may as well be shooting an infomercial.

John and Patty are furious. John kicks over a chair.

JOHN

You fool! Wohl clearly states that the observer and the observed must interact in order to shoot a documentary. It is impossible to record reality, so the documented film serves as an artificial reality....

SUSAN

(pleading)

Please, just tell me where my daughter is.

Without a beat the cameraman begins.

CAMERAMAN

Some rich weirdo who wants to take over Christmas has kidnapped her in order to get Rick to stop being Santa.

Rick and Heather poke their heads through the door, smiling ear to ear.

RICK

You rang?

Rick sees the destruction in Patty's room and looks at John angrily.

RICK (CONT'D)

Whoa! You obviously don't have the slightest idea how to cheer up a little kid. Rule one, you don't trash her room!

(pause)

Or is that rule two? Rule one might actually involve battery acid...

Susan runs over to Rick and hugs him.

SUSAN

Patty's gone. Someone took her to  
force you to stop being Santa.

Rick is appalled. He steps in front of the broken window.

RICK

We'll just see about that.

(pause)

What they didn't know is that I  
already have Santa's superpowers.  
They will never get away.

Rick sprints with all his strength to the window and leaps out. He lets out a bloodcurdling scream as he plummets to the ground. He continues to moan in agony as John looks out the window.

JOHN

(yelling)

It's the reindeer that fly.

John turns away from the window and approaches Susan.

JOHN (CONT'D)

He still needs a little more work.  
But don't worry, I have a cunning  
plan.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSAN'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Susan, Heather and Rick huddle around John, who pulls a giant book from his pocket. On the cover is printed the word "NICE". He places it on the table and opens it up.

JOHN

So, as I'm sure you know, Santa can  
check in on any kid to find out if  
they are being naughty or nice.

SUSAN

Yes.

JOHN

Well, this is how he does it.

John flips through the book and finds Patty's name.

JOHN (CONT'D)

There she is.

(to Rick)

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

I was going to show you this later,  
but I guess we need you to do this  
now.

RICK

What?

JOHN

Go to the book, close your eyes,  
and you will be able to see what  
Patty's doing. And more  
importantly, where she is.

Susan wraps her arms around John.

SUSAN

That's a great plan!

John is a little flustered, but manages to compose himself.

RICK

Here goes.

Rick goes up to the book and places his hands on it. He  
closes his eyes and seems to go into a trance. He lets out a  
smile and opens his eyes, happily.

RICK (CONT'D)

She's all right! I know where she  
is!

The group quickly follow Rick as he jumps up and leaves the  
room. However, in the book, Patty's name fades away.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

The group is now gathered in front of a door in a narrow,  
dark hallway. Rick has his Santa suit on and prepares himself  
to enter.

HEATHER

Why the Santa suit?

RICK

I might need some of those Santa  
superpowers.

JOHN

Uh, it's just a suit Rick.

RICK  
Then it psychotically helps me.

JOHN  
(to Heather)  
I know he means psychologically,  
but whatever works for him at this  
point.

RICK  
All right. Let's do this to this!

Rick summons all his strength to kick the door down.

HEATHER  
(to John)  
It doesn't look like there's a  
lock.

JOHN  
Let him do this.

Rick kicks the door with all his might and it does not budge. He falls to the ground clutching his knee and screams in agony.

SUSAN  
Well, there goes the element of  
surprise.

The door opens from the inside and Jimmy pokes his head out.

JIMMY  
Can I help youse?

John pushes his way past Jimmy. The others, including a now limping Rick, follow him inside.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

They enter the warehouse that now has a number of rough looking ELVES working at a conveyer belt assembling presents. Guns, knives and other horrific "toys" are being put together. It is quite a massive and impressive setup. The group looks on in horror as Jimmy steps in front of them.

JIMMY  
They just barged in here boss? What  
should I do wit them?

The group steady themselves as the boss steps out of the shadows. It's Patty, wearing a black outfit and sunglasses.

SUSAN

Patty!

Patty smiles.

PATTY

Mom!

Patty runs to her mom and gives her a hug. Castle steps out of the shadows as well, right into another shadow.

CASTLE

Ahem. You are the girl's mom I believe?

The group peer into the darkness, not able to see who is talking.

RICK

Hello?

Castle, realizing he is still in shadow, takes quite a lot of time re-adjusting his positioning so that they can see him. The group wait impatiently. Finally, he is well lit.

JOHN

You monster! You can't just go around kidnapping children to get what you want.

CASTLE

Well, actually, it kinda started out as a kidnapping,  
(to Susan)  
But your daughter here has some really great ideas. Really impressive.

JIMMY

Yeah. Dis kid sure hates Christmas.

CASTLE

So much so, she's in charge now. I don't hold a candle to her.

Susan looks at Patty disapprovingly.

SUSAN

We will talk about this when you get home young lady!

PATTY

Ah mom.

Patty hangs her head down and as the group goes to leave. John turns to Castle.

JOHN

You should be ashamed of yourself!

Castle and Jimmy look at each other in confusion. One of the EVIL ELVES stops working.

EVIL ELF

So, uh, should we keep working?

Patty turns back to the Evil Elves.

PATTY

No point. I'm going to be grounded for sure. Nice meeting all of you.

All the elves shrug and start preparing to leave. Castle is furious. He takes out a remote control and the exit door locks. He turns to Jimmy, practically foaming at the mouth.

CASTLE

We won't be thwarted that easily. Jimmy, if you're going to be Santa, there's only one thing standing in your way. And he's here right now.

Jimmy looks over to the group and sees Rick wearing the Santa suit. Rick gives a "who me?" smile.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

So Jimmy, or should I say, soon to be Santa, why don't you show him your little butterfly friend?

Rick and the group look thrilled. John looks over to Susan, barely able to contain his excitement.

JOHN

You have a friend that's a butterfly? How does that work?

RICK

Is it trained? Does it follow you everywhere?

Jimmy smiles and takes out his butterfly knife and begins to play with it.

JIMMY

Why don't you ask him.

John and Rick are clueless as to what Jimmy is talking about. Jimmy walks closer to them, wielding his knife.

JOHN

I'm confused. You're saying we can talk to this butterfly? Like it actually speaks. Which is great, but yet you're approaching us in such a threatening manner.

RICK

Really sending weird messages.

Castle is fuming.

CASTLE

His butterfly knife!

John and Rick finally get it.

JOHN

Yikes! A butterfly "knife"!

RICK

That's waaay different.

Jimmy is getting closer. He looks Rick up and down and then menacingly licks his knife.

JIMMY

I'm going to enjoy this.

Rick is very nervous now.

RICK

(to John)

This guy is really scary.

JOHN

You're telling me. I'm terrified now. To think it was only a moment ago I thought I was going to meet a talking butterfly.

John, thinking fast, quickly reaches into his pocket and pulls out a giant candy cane. He wields it like a bow staff. Rick figures out what John is doing and approves. He turns to Jimmy, happily.



RICK  
Just take the candy cane. It should  
last you days. We can forget this  
ever happened.

The whole group rolls their eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

John sits on his chair, smiles smugly and crosses his legs.

JOHN  
(proudly)  
What they didn't know, was that I  
had never been in a fight. I don't  
even like to argue if I can help  
it.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

John raises the candy cane above his head, lets out a primal yell and runs towards Jimmy. Jimmy quickly punches John in the face, knocking him out cold.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

JOHN  
I don't really like confrontation.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Rick stands defenseless as Jimmy steps over John's prone body, knife extended.

HEATHER  
You coward! Why don't you make it a  
fair fight?

Jimmy looks back to the conveyer belt with all the weapons. He is now close enough to Rick to attack. He smiles at Heather.

JIMMY  
That's a good idea.

He quickly stabs Rick in the gut. Rick gasps as the knife enters. He plummets to the ground.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
But, nah.

The group rush to Rick, Patty and Susan sobbing. John has awakened to see Heather cradling Rick, who has a knife sticking out of him. He races over.

JOHN  
Rick!

He kneels next to the shocked Rick.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Oh my God!

Suddenly, the look of shock leaves Rick's face and he looks down to where his knife wound is. He lets out a little chuckle. The rest of the group suddenly look hopeful.

RICK  
Ha. The Santa suit padding.

Heather, Patty and Susan laugh and wipe the tears from their eyes. John frowns and holds up some padding.

JOHN  
Uh, remember you didn't want to look fat in front of Heather.

Rick sees the padding and remembers.

RICK  
Oh yeah!

His head falls to the ground and he goes still.

The women begin to cry and John looks heartbroken. He turns to Jimmy angrily, but something catches him off guard. He scrutinizes Jimmy carefully.

JOHN  
Wait. I know you.  
(pause)  
Yeah. You're little Jimmy Knuckles.

Jimmy is taken a little aback at this, but holds up his knife defiantly.

JIMMY

Yeah. And if I am, what of it?

JOHN

You're that kid... the one that we missed that Christmas. I think it was eighty-nine.

(pause)

I've always felt terrible about that.

Castle is getting impatient.

CASTLE

Stab him, Jimmy!

However, Jimmy is now looking very uncertain.

JOHN

That's right. It was a stupid accounting error. You never got any presents that year if memory serves.

(pause)

Man, I am so sorry.

CASTLE

Knife the elf!

JIMMY

I never got nuttin that year! And all I wanted was one present That's it.

John looks as if he is growing nostalgic thinking back on it.

JOHN

That's right.

(pause)

You didn't get it any other year?

Jimmy is starting to tear up.

JIMMY

No! I thoughts you forgot about me.

John hangs his head in shame.

JOHN

No. No. It was just a dumb mistake.

(getting an idea)

But wait!

This has caught Jimmy's attention. Castle is fuming.

John reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a hammer and screwdriver.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I know it's late, but how about I  
get you your present now?

JIMMY  
You'd do that?

John turns around and sawing and hammering can be heard. He turns back around holding a beautifully wrapped present.

Jimmy begins bawling. He drops the knife and approaches John who smiles as he hands him the present.

JOHN  
Merry Christmas, Jimmy.

Wiping the tears from his eyes, and smiling giddily, Jimmy opens his present. Castle watches, disgusted.

A boxing glove attached to a spring rockets out of the box and knocks Jimmy out cold.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

JOHN  
Don't feel bad for him. He had  
wanted an Uzi.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Jimmy is lying on the ground and John runs back over to Rick. The women sit around him, not so worried now. John looks at Rick with concern.

JOHN  
(to Susan)  
Is he breathing?

SUSAN  
If by breathing, you mean snoring,  
then yes. Yes he is.

JOHN  
Huh?

Rick rubs the sleep out of his eyes and smiles at John.

JOHN (CONT'D)

How?

RICK

Turns out the suit does have superpowers after all.

Rick pulls the bloodless knife out of his suit and stands up.

JOHN

Oh my God! That's amazing!

RICK

So you were wrong.

JOHN

What?

RICK

About the suit just being a suit. You were totally wrong.

JOHN

Uh, yeah. I guess.

RICK

No. You totally were.

JOHN

I didn't know...

RICK

And I was right.

JOHN

Well, I didn't know...

RICK

Admit it. You were wrong.

JOHN

What does it matter...

RICK

Admit it.

JOHN

All right. I was wrong.

RICK

And I was right.

JOHN  
And you were right.

Rick motions towards the women.

RICK  
Now tell them.

John looks to the heavens for help.

Castle is defeated, but he has not given up.

CASTLE  
So, you think you've won?

The group look at each other, considering it. Then they all nod to Castle.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
Well, I'm afraid that's where you  
are wrong. DEAD wrong.

Castle takes out his remote control. Before pressing the button he closes his eyes.

CASTLE (CONT'D)  
(quietly)  
Please. Please. Please.

He presses the button and a huge safe falls on him.

The group smiles, except for John, who is mortified. Heather gives Rick a big kiss and Susan hugs Patty.

JOHN  
We just saw a man die. I can't  
believe it.

Rick comes behind him and gives him a big bear hug.

RICK  
Christmas is saved!

JOHN  
(to himself)  
I wonder if he had a family. What  
if he had kids?

The group behind him all hold hands and dance in celebration.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(to himself)

What if his parents are still  
alive? A parent should never  
outlive their child...

The safe door opens and out walks a dazed Castle, smiling at  
the celebration.

CASTLE

Well what do we have here?

The group turns to Castle, worried. Suddenly Castle starts to  
dance and sing "Jingle Bells". The group begin to laugh.

HEATHER

(smiling)

He's got a brain injury!

RICK

It's a Christmas miracle!

Castle joins the celebration as John looks at the elves  
standing at the conveyer belt. He turns back to the  
cameraman.

JOHN

Man. Look at that setup. Conveyer  
belts. Weapons. Factory equipment.  
That would've been a really  
fantastic action set piece. Could  
you imagine the excitement if your  
doc ended like that? Almost seems  
like a missed opportunity.

Susan runs up to John and gives him a hug. Patty gives him a  
happy smile.

John kneels down to Patty's level and gives her a candy cane.

JOHN (CONT'D)

So, what do you think of Christmas  
now that you've seen what can  
happen if you don't embrace the  
Christmas spirit?

PATTY

Still hate it. Probably even more  
now.

John seems surprised, but Susan give Patty a hug.

SUSAN

But we're going to respect her feelings. And if she wants to change them in the future, we'll respect them then too.

PATTY

I still want the presents though.

SUSAN

Of course. We're not monsters.

PATTY

And maybe I'd like it a little more if John spent Christmas with us this year.

John looks at Susan, who smiles back at him.

SUSAN

I'd like that.

JOHN

(nervously)  
I'd like that too.

CASTLE

(yelling)  
Merry Christmas everyone!

Rick walks up to John and puts his arm around him.

RICK

Well pal, so ends our Christmas adventure. I learned a lot, and had fun doing it.

JOHN

Me too, Rick. This is possibly one of the best times I've ever had. I wouldn't trade it for the world.

Rick extends his hand.

RICK

Until we meet again, friend.

John shakes it happily.

JOHN

Until we meet again.  
(pause)  
Ah, to heck with it!



John gives Rick a big hug and Rick gladly reciprocates.

Everyone laughs as Jimmy still lies prone on the floor.

John's cheerfulness disappears suddenly when a realization hits him.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Dear God! We still have to get you ready to be Santa. We're not even close yet!

RICK

Oh, yeah.

Susan, Patty and Heather walk up to them.

SUSAN

You can count on us to help.

HEATHER

We'd be happy to.

PATTY

We can use my evil elves!

John looks to the elves, who all smile and rub their hands together, deviously.

JOHN

I don't know if we need to do that. But thanks! This should be a breeze now!

SPIN DISSOLVE

MONTAGE TO PEPPY MUSIC

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

John is yelling at Rick who has put the presents in the fireplace.

SPIN DISSOLVE

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Susan is yelling at Rick who has attached cardboard reindeer to the back of a sleigh.

SPIN DISSOLVE

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Heather is yelling with frustration at Rick who is wearing two stockings that were being hung up to put presents in.

SPIN DISSOLVE

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Patty cries as Rick tries to comfort her after giving her a DVD of Watership Down as a present.

SPIN DISSOLVE

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

An exhausted John sits on the couch while the rest of the disheveled group sit around him.

JOHN  
Well. We failed.

SUSAN  
Yup.

JOHN  
Christmas is ruined.

Patty raises her hands above her head happily.

PATTY  
Yay!

JOHN  
Which means, no presents.

Patty crosses her arms and leans back, unhappily.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
It's Christmas Eve, and I think  
Rick has only gotten worse.

RICK  
Not true! I am totally Santa.  
(laughing)  
Ho Ho Ho and a bottle of rum.

JOHN  
That's not it. Don't say that.

John gets up and sighs.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
But, we gotta try. Come on Rick.  
Time to ruin Christmas.

Rick jumps up, excitedly.

RICK  
Let's do this to this!

John takes out his cellphone and dials.

JOHN  
(into cellphone)  
Hey Comet. You can pick us up now.  
We'll be in the backyard...

John hangs up the phone.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
... sobbing.

Susan stands up.

SUSAN  
Wait.  
(pause)  
By training... or attempting to  
train Rick, we've all learned how  
to be like Santa ourselves. And we  
definitely know what not to do.  
With our help, Christmas should be  
okay. Or at least not ruined!

John and Rick look at each other, optimistically.

JOHN  
That could work. You'd do that?

PATTY  
We said we'd spend Christmas  
together.

Rick is looking out the back window.

RICK  
A goat just landed in our backyard.

JOHN  
That's a reindeer...

He looks at the three girls on the sofa and smiles.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Our ride is here.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S WORKSHOP - DUSK

John and crew walk into Santa's busy workshop. The elves are working like gangbusters to get the last of the toys boxed as John escorts the group to the factory floor. They pass by a MOLE who is sitting on one of the tables.

JOHN  
(casually)  
Hey Frank.

John goes to a clearing on the floor and turns to the gang.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
All right. First things first. I  
have no idea how to fit all these  
toys in the sleigh.  
(smiling)  
We're doomed already!

Everyone sighs.

SANTA (O.S.)  
Ho! Ho! Ho!

John turns in shock towards Santa, who is strolling in with Twinkle.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
Back so soon?

Rick is astonished.

RICK  
Oh my God! Santa Claus is real?

John turns to him, annoyed.

JOHN  
How did you go this far if you  
didn't think.... Ah, forget it.  
(to Santa)  
Of course I'm back. Aren't you  
supposed to be on vacation?

Santa looks to Twinkle mischievously.

SANTA

Oh yeah, that. That's what we call a "white Christmas lie".

JOHN

What?

TWINKLE

Well, you were so stressed out.

SANTA

And it's not like you'd ever take a vacation.

TWINKLE

You were like a tightly wound ball of steel wool!

SANTA

So we decided to tell you I was going on vacation in order to get you out of the office.

TWINKLE

You really needed it.

(pause)

You were kind of a drag to work with.

John is in shock.

JOHN

So you're not going to Hawaii?

SANTA

No. That would be insane.

JOHN

And Rick isn't the new Santa Claus?

SANTA

No. But he's a super nice guy. I knew you two would become fast friends.

JOHN

(angrily)

You're right. He's a great guy. But that's beside the point. I've been going out of my mind with worry about this!

SANTA

You would have worried no matter what.

Santa looks over the group who accompany John.

SANTA (CONT'D)

And now it looks like you have a nice group of people you can call friends. If that's not a great Christmas present, I don't know what is.

John, still angry, goes to speak further. But he turns to his friends behind him and sighs.

JOHN

That is true. They are a great group of people.

Twinkle nudges Santa and points to his watch. Santa gives him a nod.

SANTA

So, just enjoy yourselves. I got to go to work tonight, but I'll see you tomorrow. And also...  
(loudly)  
Merry Christmas!

Santa and Twinkle walk by the group, and John turns towards the exiting duo.

JOHN

Actually Santa, you're right. I do need a vacation.

Santa turns towards John, happily.

SANTA

I'm glad to hear that, John. After wrapping up this Christmas, I think you should take a long, relaxing vacation.

JOHN

Actually, I'm going to go now. But don't worry. I have a replacement.

John points to a surprised Rick.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(to Rick)  
You know accounting, don't you?

RICK

Of course I know accounting. A one  
and a two and a three and a....

Santa's jovial expression turns to concern.

JOHN

Hawaii sounds nice.

John escorts Rick to a desk.

JOHN (CONT'D)

This will be your workspace. If you  
have any questions, I'll be back in  
about a month.

Rick is thrilled. He picks up a calculator and points it at  
the computer.

RICK

The remote for your TV isn't  
working.

Santa slumps his shoulders.

SANTA

(sadly)

Ho. Ho.....

He turns around and walks out.

Susan walks over to John.

SUSAN

You're not really going to go on  
vacation before Christmas.

JOHN

Nah. Just thought I'd get a little  
revenge on him. I'll tell him  
before he takes off.

SUSAN

Well, when Christmas is done,  
Hawaii sounds nice.

Susan give John a romantic kiss, leaving John speechless.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas, John.

John gives a genuinely happy smile.

JOHN  
Merry Christmas.

The cameraman zooms out to see the whole group, celebrating happily. He turns the camera towards a full length mirror on the wall, but there's no reflection. The camera seems to be floating in the air.

Rick notices this and alerts the others.

RICK  
The cameraman... he doesn't have a reflection.

Rick backs toward the others as the camera approaches him. John pushes Susan behind him, protectively.

RICK (CONT'D)  
He's been a vampire this whole time!

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)  
I want to suck your blood!

The group screams as the cameraman lunges towards them.

CUT TO BLACK:

CREDITS

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

The credits cut and we see John and his group of friends watching the film. Rick holds hands with Heather. Susan and Patty sit on either side of John. Dudley and family are gobbling down popcorn. And Santa, Twinkle and Castle sit in the back row.

SUSAN  
I guess we're lucky that happened or we wouldn't have been able to watch this for Halloween Horror Movie Mania.

JOHN  
Yes, we were very lucky he was a vampire. It fits in perfectly with this year's theme of Identifying With The Monster as Voyeur. Next up is Peeping Tom and then we end the night with My Little Eye.



HEATHER

What about something like  
Disturbia?

JOHN

(smugly)

The only monster as voyeur there  
would be us watching a trainwreck.  
Give me Rear Window any day, thank  
you very much.

Susan looks at John, disapprovingly.

JOHN (CONT'D)

But if you liked the movie, that's  
great. Good for you!

Heather smiles at John.

HEATHER

You're getting better!

John smiles, pleased with himself.

RICK

I liked the part where the guy  
fought that other guy with a candy  
cane!

JOHN

That was me.

RICK

Yeah! And the part where that other  
guy made it snow.

JOHN

Also me.

John stands up to address his friends.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'd like to thank everyone for  
making tonight's Halloween Horror  
Movie Mania the most successful  
ever.

(pause)

Thanks for coming.

CASTLE

Thanks for having us!

TWINKLE

And buying candy cane flavoured  
popcorn.

JOHN

If it saves me from buying pumpkin  
flavoured popcorn, candy canes win  
every time.

SANTA

Ho ho ho! Happy Halloween!

As John sits down, Susan gives him a kiss on the cheek.

SUSAN

Happy Halloween.

JOHN

(smiling)

Happy Halloween to you too.

Patty stands up, cheerfully.

PATTY

Happy Halloween to everyone!

They all smile, revealing vampire fangs.

Cut to credits, with a very Chritmassy design, but with a  
song akin to the Monster Mash playing underneath.

FADE TO BLACK.

