

# **MATTHEW THE ANGRY ELF**

Written by

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**FADE IN**

EXT. NORTH POLE VILLAGE - NIGHT

A view of the North Pole Village, home to Santa, the elves and the reindeer. The center of town with Santa's huge home and a town square all decorated for Christmas with large well-lit trees and snow all around.

Happy ELVES, short with long pointy ears, in candy cane colored tights and red and green tunics with red and green hats, play in the snow and SING CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

The outskirts of town are not as nice. Not dangerous but nor are they pretty or decorated. Industrial and dirty.

INT. REINDEER STABLE - NIGHT

MATTHEW, (30's) a bitter, angry elf, who is jacked from his years of weightlifting, shovels reindeer shit from the stalls into a wheel barrow. His elf uniform old and ratty.

He mutters under his breath.

MATTHEW  
Fucking reindeer...

A RED FLASHING LIGHT starts blinking. Matthew stops his work and opens the main doors of the stable.

EXT. REINDEER STABLE - NIGHT

Matthew looks up and sees RED AND BLUE FLASHING LIGHTS in the sky, a reindeer powered AMBULANCE SLED.

Matthew steps to the side of the stable and watches the following scene unfold.

INT. REINDEER STABLE - NIGHT

A TEAM OF EMTs (Elf Medical Technicians) in white uniforms run into the stable with a gurney. They wait by the side of the stable.

The sled, pulled by a half dozen large reindeer, swoops out of the sky, LIGHTS STILL FLASHING and glides to a perfect landing inside the stable.

A well choreographed response as the EMTs spring into action. The back of the ambulance opens and they slide out a stretcher with a CATATONIC ELF, LINGEN (wearing the elf outfit) on his back with his arms outstretched in front of him, eyes wide open and a look of terror on his face.

The EMTs transfer Lingen to the gurney.

HEAD EMT

How long as he been like this?

DRIVER

At least an hour.

The EMTs whisk Lingen to the medical ward. The DRIVER and his ASSISTANT start to unbridle the reindeer.

ASSISTANT

What could do that?

DRIVER

Humans... Hey Matthew, ready for more shit?

Matthew gives him the finger but doesn't budge from his spot.

INT. SANTA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Santa's office is dominated by a stone fireplace with a roaring fire. Lots of Christmas decorations, a globe, maps adorn the walls.

SANTA, the stereotype, fat, white hair and beard, red velvet pants and white shirt, sits at his desk playing TETRIS on his computer.

KNOCK on the door. Santa quickly switches his screen to a spreadsheet.

SANTA

Come in.

TOLPPI, head elf (in the now ubiquitous elf uniform), efficient though not very creative. A good soldier for Santa.

TOLPPI

We've had an incident. Lingen had to be rescued.

SANTA

What happened?

TOLPPI  
We're not sure. He's catatonic.

SANTA  
Have you looked at the elf-cam  
footage?

TOLPPI  
No one has the nerve to do it.

SANTA  
Give it to me.

Tolppi hands Santa a memory card. Tolppi turns to go.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
You're not staying?

TOLPPI  
Um, if it's all the same to you  
sir, I'd rather wait outside.

Tolppi goes out and closes the door.

Santa puts the card into his computer and the following scene shows on his screen in poor quality body-cam style, showing Lingen's point-of-view.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

The Santa Village in the atrium of a crowded shopping mall. Red velvet ropes delineate the line to see Santa. FAMILIES with small children wait to see the big man.

HEATHER, (8) spoiled brat, sidesteps the line and pushes her way forward. We see Lingen's arms outstretched indicating for her to stop and we hear Lingen's voice.

LINGEN (O.S.)  
Sorry, dear. You'll have to get in  
line.

Heather stops, looks right at Lingen.

HEATHER  
Fuck off shorty, I'm here to see  
the fat man.

LINGEN (O.S.)  
Uh... um...

HEATHER  
Out of my way fuck face.

As Heather pushes past him Lingen falls over onto his back.  
 Santa stops the video.

BACK TO SANTA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

SANTA  
 Tolppi!

Tolppi runs in.

TOLPPI  
 Yes sir?

SANTA  
 Get Matthew.

TOLPPI  
 Matthew? Really?

SANTA  
 Yes really.

TOLPPI  
 But... he's so...

SANTA  
 I know, I know. Get him, now.

EXT. MATTHEW'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tolppi walks through the not so nice edge of town where large storehouses give way to nasty hovels.

He approaches a seedy looking little house that has no decorations, falling shutters, and generally looks rundown.

He KNOCKS on the door. No answer.

TOLPPI  
 Hello? Anyone here?

MATTHEW (O.S.)  
 I'm out back.

Tolppi walks around to the back of the house. The yard has a high chain link fence (for no apparent reason) and inside, Matthew, in shorts and a sleeveless tee shirt which exposes some amateur tattoos, lifts weights like a scene from a prison film.

TOLPPI  
 Santa wants to see you.

MATTHEW

He knows where I live. If he wants to see me he can get off his fat ass and come down here.

TOLPPI

Why do you have to be so difficult?

MATTHEW

Fuck you, that's why.

Tolppi shakes his head as he walks away.

INT. SANTA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Tolppi enters. MRS. CLAUS (resembles a plump Betty White but she is tough as nails and will do anything to protect her husband) stands by Santa.

SANTA

Where's Matthew?

TOLPPI

He... he said if you want to see him you should come to his place.

SANTA

That little bastard.

MRS. CLAUS

Now honey.

SANTA

The insolence.

MRS. CLAUS

I know. I'll go talk to him.

SANTA

No, no. I'll do it.

MRS. CLAUS

If you go it'll just feed his ego. I'll get him up here, you can count on that.

EXT. MATTHEW'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mrs. Claus, bundled up against the cold, arrives at Matthew's door. She KNOCKS.

MATTHEW (O.S.)

Fuck off!

MRS. CLAUS

Charming. No, I shan't be fucking off.

Matthew opens the door.

MATTHEW

I wasn't expecting you.

MRS. CLAUS

I didn't think so. Enough of your nonsense. Santa needs your help and you are going to come talk to him.

MATTHEW

You seem pretty sure of yourself.

MRS. CLAUS

How badly would you like to go to a place where you will fit right in?

MATTHEW

Where the fuck is that?

MRS. CLAUS

New Jersey.

A smile creeps across Matthew's face.

INT. SANTA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Matthew comes into the study with Mrs. Claus.

SANTA

Ah, Matthew, so nice of you to come.

MATTHEW

Like I had a choice.

SANTA

We have a problem that I need your help with.

MATTHEW

Would this have anything to do with what happened to Lingen?

SANTA

As a matter of fact it does. Here,  
watch this.

Santa turns on the video, starting from Lingen's encounter  
with Heather.

INSERT VIDEO

LINGEN (O.S.)

Sorry, dear. You'll have to get in  
line.

Heather stops, looks right at Lingen.

HEATHER

Fuck off shorty, I'm here to see  
the fat man.

LINGEN (O.S.)

Uh... um...

HEATHER

Out of my way fuck face.

As Heather pushes past, Lingen falls over onto his back.

Santa stops the video.

BACK TO SANTA'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

SANTA

So you can see what we're dealing  
with here.

MATTHEW

True spirit of Christmas. Is there  
more?

Santa hits play.

INSERT VIDEO

The view from Lingen lying flat on the floor.

TONY (40's, tough looking Italian) Heather's father, leans  
over Lingen, looks like he might punch the elf.

TONY

Is this little fucker bothering you  
Heather?

HEATHER

He's in my way!



SANDY (40's busy-body, self-centered), Heather's mother, a true Karen-type, also leans in.

SANDY  
Did this little freak touch you?

HEATHER  
(lying)  
Yeah.

SANDY  
(shouting)  
Where is the manager? This little creep touched my daughter. Where is the manager?

BACK TO SANTA'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

SANTA  
I've seen enough.

He shuts off the video.

MATTHEW  
So what do you want me to do?

SANTA  
I want you to give that family the true meaning of Christmas.

MATTHEW  
Why me?

SANTA  
You saw how Lingen reacted to her foul language. She talks like you so I thought you would be the best one to bring them the Christmas spirit.

MATTHEW  
How do you propose I do that?

SANTA  
I don't know... get them a puppy. That always works in the movies.

MATTHEW  
You want me to go to New Jersey and give some trashy family a puppy? You can do that yourself in like two weeks.

MRS. CLAUS

Matthew, they are probably not bad people. They just seem kind of self-involved. Perhaps you can find a way to remind them that giving is more important than taking.

Matthew considers.

MATTHEW

What's in it for me?

SANTA

The joy of knowing you have done a good deed.

MATTHEW

Yeah, like I said, what's in it for me.

MRS. CLAUS

Did you have something in mind?

MATTHEW

Two weeks fully paid Caribbean vacation every year.

SANTA

Outrageous!

MRS. CLAUS

How about one week this January?

Santa is about to object but she holds up a finger.

MATTHEW

Ten days, every January for the next five years.

MRS. CLAUS

One week, three years.

MATTHEW

Nine days, four years.

SANTA

Oh my Lord you two. Stop! Fine, whatever.

MATTHEW

Nine days, four years and I'm in.

MRS. CLAUS

Done.

SANTA  
You'll be leaving in a couple  
hours, be ready.

Matthew leaves.

MRS. CLAUS  
Do you think he'll defect?

SANTA  
He might, but then at least we'll  
be rid of him.

MRS. CLAUS  
It doesn't worry you?

SANTA  
What's he going to do? Tell his  
story? No one would believe him.

INT. MATTHEW'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Matthew packs light, a few things in a green and red sack he  
can throw over his back.

He picks up a marker and writes a note on a piece of cloth.  
He repeats this, writing a dozen more. He rolls them up and  
ties them with string, puts them in his pocket and heads out.

EXT. NORTH POLE VILLAGE - NIGHT

Matthew walks stealthily across the desolate landscape just  
outside of town.

There are some odd candy-cane colored ventilation tubes  
sticking up out of the snow. Matthew looks around to be sure  
no one is watching and then drops one of his rolled notes  
into the tube. He runs to the next tube and drops another  
one. He runs to the next tube to do it again.

INT. REINDEER STABLE - NIGHT

Another stable, this one with black reindeer and a black  
stealth sled. TWO ELVES, RAGNILD and ULF dressed in SWAT team  
black, wait for Matthew.

Matthew saunters in.

ULF  
You're late.

MATTHEW

Big whoop. You guys taking me to  
New Jersey?

ULF

We'll get you as close as we can  
before sun up.

MATTHEW

And then what am I supposed to do?

RAGNILD

I don't know, book a flight I  
guess.

MATTHEW

As if!

ULF

Alright, night time's a wasting.

Matthew climbs onto the sled.

EXT. NORTH POLE VILLAGE - NIGHT

We can barely see the jet-black sled as it climbs into the  
night sky.

INT. FRUITCAKE MINE - NIGHT

Much like a coal mine but the rock face is a wall of solid  
fruitcake.

ELF MINERS carve massive hunks of fruitcake from the wall,  
chop them into one pound blocks and stack them on a mining  
car for removal.

One of the MINERS finds one of Matthew's rolled up notes. She  
looks around to be sure no one is watching. She unrolls the  
note and reads:

Elves exploited by Santa's dictatorship.

Please free us from bondage.

She rolls the note up and stuffs it into one of the pieces of  
fruitcake and makes sure the hole is covered before putting  
it in the stack.

EXT. HOLIDAY, MICHIGAN - NIGHT

Establishing shot of an adorable sign:

HOLIDAY, MICHIGAN,  
Where everyday is Special  
Population 1648

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The stealth sled comes to a stop in a dark forest.

ULF  
Okay, this is about as far as we  
can go.

MATTHEW  
Is this New Jersey?

RAGNILD  
It's your stop is what it is.

She pushes Matthew out of the sled and he falls into the snow. Before he can object the sled takes off leaving him alone in the dark.

MATTHEW  
Well shit.

He looks around, nothing. He perks up his ears, the POINTY TOPS TWITCH. He HEARS MUSIC in the distance. He starts walking in that direction.

EXT. BARN DANCE - NIGHT

Christmas lights adorn a red barn and there is MUSIC playing and people LAUGHING inside.

A COUPLE, GREG (30-ish), handsome farmer type, and BRENDA CARLSON (30-ish) fashionable city girl, come out of the barn and walk toward a heavily decorated Gazebo complete with Mistletoe hanging in the center.

BRENDA  
This is so much fun.

GREG  
Then why don't you stay?

BRENDA  
Oh Greg, this has been great but  
it's not my life.

GREG  
It could be.

BRENDA  
Greg, you're a nice guy, but I  
can't see myself living on the  
farm.

GREG  
I know... and I can't see myself  
living in the city but maybe we can  
find a way.

Greg and Brenda make their way to the center of the gazebo.

BRENDA  
I don't know Greg...

GREG  
You know how I feel about you.

She looks away. He looks up and sees...

GREG (CONT'D)  
Hey, mistletoe.

They are about to kiss as Matthew comes out of the forest.

MATTHEW  
Hey! Hey you in the gazebo. Where  
the fuck am I?

Brenda and Greg's jaws drop. They look to the edge of the  
forest and see Matthew.

GREG  
Uh... uh, Holiday, Michigan.

MATTHEW  
Are we close to New Jersey?

BRENDA  
No, not really.

MATTHEW  
Oh those fuckers, I swear to God I  
am going to kick their asses.

BRENDA  
You seem upset.

MATTHEW

Yeah, I'm upset. I'm supposed to be in New Jersey.

GREG

Well, Michigan's nice.

MATTHEW

Yeah, Okay. How can I get to New Jersey from here?

Matthew comes to the gazebo.

BRENDA

Gee, you could maybe get a flight.

MATTHEW

Like on a human airplane?

GREG

Yeah?

MATTHEW

No fucking way. Do you have any idea how those things stay in the air?

BRENDA

I do... I mean, I'm an engineer.

MATTHEW

Is there anything to eat around here?

BRENDA

Yeah, there's food in the barn.

MATTHEW

Do I look like an animal to you?

BRENDA

No, no it's a dance. Here, let's take him over.

GREG

But...

BRENDA

C'mon. Hi, I'm Brenda and this is Greg.

MATTHEW

I'm Matthew.

BRENDA

I love your costume. And the ears,  
wow, they look so real.

Matthew rolls his eyes.

GREG

Brenda? Just a minute. Can we talk?

MATTHEW

Hey, jackass, read the situation  
will ya? Why do you think she was  
so glad I interrupted you? She's  
not interested in you like that.

GREG

Is he right?

BRENDA

I was telling you Greg, I mean  
you're great but how would it work?

GREG

We'd find a way.

MATTHEW

That's some bullshit. "We'd find a  
way" is like code for drop all your  
shit honey and get over here cause  
I got a boner.

Matthew marches toward the barn.

Brenda follows Matthew.

GREG

Brenda?

INT. BARN DANCE - NIGHT

Matthew and Brenda enter the barn. A band at one end plays  
CHRISTMAS SONGS (the same ones we heard in the North Pole  
village), PEOPLE IN THEIR CHRISTMAS OUTFITS dance. A MAN  
DRESSED AS AN ELF bartends and ANOTHER PERSON IN AN ELF  
COSTUME brings around trays of snacks.

Matthew grabs about half the tray and shoves the food in his  
mouth.

MATTHEW

I don't fucking believe this.



BRENDA

What's wrong?

MATTHEW

Like elves are only allowed to be servants here too. What a fucking nightmare.

BRENDA

What do you mean?

MATTHEW

I mean we're like all slaves to Santa at the North Pole and I come here and see this.

BRENDA

Wow, you are really in character.

MATTHEW

Okay Brenda, I have to get to New Jersey.

BRENDA

I'm driving back to Chicago. I could give you a ride. You could get a flight or a train or something from there.

MATTHEW

Are you nuts? You don't know me. What if I'm a serial killer?

BRENDA

Oh, you're too adorable for that.

MATTHEW

You are nuts.

BRENDA

Or maybe I'm a serial killer.

MATTHEW

I doubt it. You would have killed that Greg moron already.

BRENDA

He's not a bad guy...

MATTHEW

Just not the guy for you.

BRENDA  
I should probably thank you for  
interrupting us back there.

Greg enters the barn, looks sheepishly at Brenda.

MATTHEW  
How soon can we leave?

She sees Greg.

BRENDA  
Sooner the better I think.

INT. BRENDA'S CAR - NIGHT

Brenda drives her SUV. Matthew next to her in the front seat.  
He is intrigued by all the lights on the dashboard.

MATTHEW  
What is all this shit?

BRENDA  
You name it. It's connected to my  
phone so it's like maps and music  
and text messages. Oh, over there  
is temperature control.

MATTHEW  
It's hot as hell in here.

BRENDA  
It's like sixty five degrees.

MATTHEW  
Do these windows open?

He pushes a button and the window goes down.

BRENDA  
Seriously? It's twenty degrees out  
there.

Matthew leans his head out the window, enjoying the cold.

Brenda pushes the button and starts raising his window

MATTHEW  
Hey, wait...

BRENDA  
It's freezing.

Matthew pulls his head back in.

MATTHEW  
How long is this drive?

BRENDA  
Well, in good conditions it's about  
six hours.

SNOW starts falling.

MATTHEW  
Great.

BRENDA  
Maybe you can drive later.

MATTHEW  
You want me to drive this thing?

BRENDA  
Don't you know how to drive?

MATTHEW  
A sled, sure. Flying reindeer? No  
problem. But this thing?

BRENDA  
Okay, Matthew, look, I get the  
whole elf thing, great look,  
excellent costume, but seriously,  
can you drop the act?

MATTHEW  
Not an act. I'm a North Pole elf  
and Santa sent me on a mission to  
New Jersey but the stealth team  
fucking dropped me here instead.

BRENDA  
Okay, whatever. But seriously, you  
don't know how to drive?

MATTHEW  
Not this.

BRENDA  
You mind if I turn on some music?

MATTHEW  
Do you have to?

BRENDA  
What kind of music do you like?

MATTHEW  
What do you mean?

BRENDA  
What do you mean what do I mean?

MATTHEW  
I mean there's ten Christmas songs.

BRENDA  
So we'll listen to something else?

MATTHEW  
Something else?

BRENDA  
Whatever you want.

MATTHEW  
I don't understand what you are  
talking about. There are the ten  
songs. That's it.

BRENDA  
I mean classical or country or rap.  
You don't like any other kind of  
music?

MATTHEW  
There's other kinds of music?

BRENDA  
Seriously?

She pushes a button on the steering wheel. The car BEEPS

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
Play Mozart.

MECHANICAL CAR VOICE (V.O.)  
Okay, Playing Mozart Eine Kleine  
Nachtmusik, k five two five.

The MUSIC PLAYS. Matthew dumbfounded.

MATTHEW  
What?

BRENDA  
I know, right? You just talk to the  
car-

MATTHEW  
What is this music?

BRENDA

Mozart.

MATTHEW

Is there a lot of this Mozart music.

BRENDA

It's called classical. Were you raised in a cult or something?

MATTHEW

Yes, something like that.

Matthew listens to the music, in awe.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Matthew sound asleep as the MUSIC PLAYS.

A DEER in the road.

BRENDA

Oh SHIT!

Matthew wakes just as Brenda swerves to miss the deer. The car slides off the road into a ditch. One back tire in the air, Matthew's door pressed into the snowbank.

The ENGINE SPUTTERS and dies.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

MATTHEW

Yeah, I'm fine.

Brenda tries to start the car but nothing happens.

BRENDA

Oh shit.

MATTHEW

What's wrong?

BRENDA

It won't start.

MATTHEW

Try again.

BRENDA

I am trying.

Silence.

MATTHEW

Now what?

BRENDA

I'll call for help.

She looks at her phone.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Shit, shit... shit. No service.

MATTHEW

Meaning?

BRENDA

Meaning we're stuck.

MATTHEW

Maybe someone else will drive along  
and find us.

BRENDA

I hope. Most people were probably  
too smart to drive in these  
conditions. We're going to freeze.

MATTHEW

No, it's only like twenty degrees  
out.

BRENDA

That's below freezing. There might  
be a blanket in the back.

Brenda undoes her seatbelt and slides toward Matthew.

MATTHEW

I'll go.

Matthew climbs into the back and finds a blanket.

BRENDA

Oh great. Maybe I can get back  
there with you.

Brenda awkwardly climbs into the back.

MATTHEW

It's okay, I won't bite.

Brenda curls up next to him.

BRENDA  
You are so warm.

Matthew puts the blanket over the two of them.

MATTHEW  
You're not very warm.

BRENDA  
No I am not. Okay, so since we're getting closer, so to speak, tell me about you.

MATTHEW  
What can I tell you. I'm an elf from the North Pole and I'm on a mission.

BRENDA  
Okay, I'll go first. I'm Brenda Carlson and I'm twenty seven and I'm an engineer. I design airplane parts. I grew up in Bloomington, Indiana.

MATTHEW  
Parents?

BRENDA  
Yes, I had parents. Mom was a school teacher and Dad worked in insurance. How about you? Parents?

MATTHEW  
Well, in the old days people used to give each other books as Christmas presents.

BRENDA  
I vaguely recall that.

MATTHEW  
My dad was in charge of books but he broke the rules. He read the books.

BRENDA  
Reading is against the rules?

MATTHEW  
Oh we can read all the Christmas stories. But my dad read everything.

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

He got particularly interested in political stuff so Santa banished him.

BRENDA

Good story.

MATTHEW

I heard a rumor that he ended up teaching Political Science at Berkeley.

BRENDA

What was his name? Maybe we can find him.

MATTHEW

Niles Halla.

BRENDA

Halla?

MATTHEW

It means frost. But it was a long time ago.

BRENDA

And your mother?

MATTHEW

After my dad was sent away she was angry.

BRENDA

I can imagine.

MATTHEW

So she picked up where my dad left off and tried to organize the elves.

BRENDA

So he banished her too?

MATTHEW

Worse. He sent her to work in the fruitcake mines.

BRENDA

The fruitcake mines?

MATTHEW

Where do you think fruitcake comes from?



BRENDA  
The store?

MATTHEW  
Funny.

BRENDA  
Seriously, people bake it.

MATTHEW  
(horrified)  
What kind of monster would do that?

BRENDA  
Okay, so instead you want me to  
believe in fruitcake mines?

MATTHEW  
Deep under the North Pole their are  
veins of fruitcake that run through  
the ice and rock and the people  
Santa wants to punish get sent  
there. They dig fruitcake until  
they die.

BRENDA  
That's a horrible story.

MATTHEW  
That's why I kind of have a chip on  
my shoulder about Santa.

BRENDA  
I can see that. So how old are you?

MATTHEW  
I'm thirty three.

BRENDA  
Oh... I was thinking you're like  
two hundred or something.

MATTHEW  
Do I look that old?

BRENDA  
No, I mean, I just thought maybe  
elves are like ageless or  
something.

MATTHEW  
That would be weird.

BRENDA  
That would be weird? You just told  
me your mother died in a fruitcake  
mine! We should probably try and  
get some sleep.

They close their eyes.

THE CAMERA STARTS TO PULL AWAY AND FADE WHEN WE HEAR:

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
Matthew, I have to pee.

WE COME BACK TO THEM in the back of the car.

MATTHEW  
Like, right now?

BRENDA  
Well soon.

MATTHEW  
Okay... So go outside.

BRENDA  
You have to come with me.

MATTHEW  
Fine.

They struggle to get one of the doors open. They awkwardly  
climb out of the car into the snow.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)  
So pee already.

BRENDA  
What if a car comes?

MATTHEW  
There hasn't been another car in  
the last hour.

BRENDA  
I'll go over there.

Brenda walks across the road toward a line of trees.

As she steps there is the SOUND OF ICE CRACKING. She stops,  
looks terrified, but nothing happens.

She nears a tree, lowers her pants and squats.

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
Don't look.

MATTHEW  
Like you're doing anything I want  
to see.

She finishes, pulls up her pants and starts back toward the car.

She reaches where she heard the crack before and takes a delicate step. Nothing happens. She confidently takes another step, there is a small CRACK sound and she is gone, fallen through the ice into a pond beneath.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)  
Oh shit!

Matthew runs to the spot and reaches into the dark icy water and pulls her out.

She is in shock and her clothes instantly start to freeze.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)  
Oh shit.

Matthew pulls off his red and green cap, turns it inside out and reveals a tiny radio and transponder.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)  
I've got a code six at this  
location. ASAP.

Matthew runs to the car and grabs the blanket. He comes back and puts the blanket over Brenda.

BRENDA  
C-O-L-D...

She is shivering and barely able to talk.

MATTHEW  
Stay with me. Help will be here in  
a few minutes.

BRENDA  
C-O-L-D...

Matthew crawls under the blanket and tries to warm her up.

MATTHEW  
You're going to be okay....

Suddenly there is a WHOOSH in the air and the Stealth sled lands on the street next to them.

ULF

We got here as fast as we could.

RAGNILD

What happened?

MATTHEW

She fell through the ice.

RAGNILD

Okay, get her in the sled.

Matthew picks her up and carries her to the sled.

MATTHEW

Her clothes are soaked.

RAGNILD

Got it.

Ragnild starts removing Brenda's clothes. She sees Ulf and Matthew watching.

RAGNILD (CONT'D)

Turn around. If she wants you to see her naked she'll let you know.

Ulf and Matthew turn around.

MATTHEW

Do you think we can get the car going?

Ragnild gets Brenda's clothes off and wraps her in a heated blanket and drapes her wet clothes around a hot stove on the floor of the sled. Brenda starts to come around.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Matthew and Ulf have hitched the reindeer to the back of the car and they pull it out of the ditch.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Do you have any idea how this thing works?

ULF

I've had some experience.

Ragnild sits with Brenda who sips hot chocolate.

RAGNILD  
Are you feeling okay?

BRENDA  
I think I'm dreaming... or dead or something?

RAGNILD  
Really? Because you look like you're okay.

BRENDA  
But I'm talking to an elf in a flying sled.

RAGNILD  
Yeah, it's not protocol.

BRENDA  
Maybe I drowned.

RAGNILD  
No, Matthew got you before that. I think your clothes are almost dry.

Ragnild hands Brenda her now dry clothes.

BRENDA  
Maybe someone slipped me some drugs. Did Matthew roofie me?

RAGNILD  
What's that?

BRENDA  
Never mind. Maybe I'll wake up and be fine.

RAGNILD  
Here, I'll hold the blanket, why don't you get dressed.

As Brenda dresses Ulf gets the car started.

ULF  
Yes!

MATTHEW  
Impressive!

RAGNILD  
Okay, we're good here. Ulf, we need to get going.

MATTHEW

Thank you.

RAGNILD

Be more careful. And you're going to have to keep an eye on this one, she's seen a lot.

MATTHEW

Yeah, but no one will believe her.

Brenda, half-dazed goes to the car as Ulf finishes reattaching the reindeer to the stealth sled.

RAGNILD

Okay, we're off.

Ulf cracks the whip and the stealth sled is gone in a WHOOSH.

MATTHEW

C'mon, get in, we need to get going too.

Brenda gets in the car.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Are you okay to drive?

BRENDA

Yeah, I'll be fine. I think I'm awake.

She gets the car into gear and starts driving.

MATTHEW

Okay, Chicago here we come.

BRENDA

Matthew?

MATTHEW

Yeah?

BRENDA

How did they know we needed help?

MATTHEW

I called them.

BRENDA

How did you do that?

MATTHEW

Well it's kind of a secret but I have a communicator in my hat. Standard issue when you leave the Pole.

BRENDA

So you could have called for help like as soon as we slid off the road?

Pause.

MATTHEW

Well, technically, yes.

BRENDA

Why didn't you?

MATTHEW

It wasn't a life or death situation.

BRENDA

Maybe not for you but I could have frozen to death.

MATTHEW

No, I wasn't going to let that happen.

BRENDA

I'm too confused to know whether that makes me happy or furious.

INT. BRENDA'S CHICAGO APARTMENT - DAY

Brenda leads Matthew into her stunning high-rise apartment with a great view over the city.

MATTHEW

Oh yeah, no way you were giving this up for farm boy.

BRENDA

So we can get you a flight to New Jersey.

MATTHEW

Not getting on a human plane.

BRENDA  
But you're okay with flying  
reindeer?

MATTHEW  
I bet you are too now.

BRENDA  
I'm still trying to figure out if  
you drugged me and raped me or  
something.

MATTHEW  
I did not drug you and I did not  
rape you. How could you even think  
such a thing?

BRENDA  
Because it makes a lot more sense  
than what I think happened.

She goes to her computer and looks up the train schedule.

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
Looks like there aren't a lot of  
trains...

MATTHEW  
What are you doing?

BRENDA  
Looking at the train schedule.

MATTHEW  
How?

BRENDA  
On the internet?

MATTHEW  
What's that?

BRENDA  
Are you serious?

Matthew looks lost.

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
Come here, I'll show you.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Matthew and Brenda at her computer.



MATTHEW

Can you copy this video?

BRENDA

Sure.

MATTHEW

If anything happens to me put it on the interweb thing and embarrass the shit out of these assholes.

BRENDA

How will I know if something happens?

MATTHEW

Believe me, if someone assaults an elf you'll hear about it.

BRENDA

You expect to get assaulted?

MATTHEW

I don't know. People get weird when you try to change them.

BRENDA

That's a fact. How are you supposed to find them?

MATTHEW

I have the video and I know where they shop.

BRENDA

Well, that's easy. We can just use the facial recognition program and find them that way.

Brenda pulls up the images of the family from the elf-cam footage and quickly gets a match.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Wow, that was easy, Tony and Sandy Palmieri and their daughter Heather.

Matthew impressed.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

And... here's their address. Oh look, Sandy is running to be on the School Board.

MATTHEW

What's that?

BRENDA

It's politics for beginners. She wants to tell people how to run their local schools.

MATTHEW

Oh yeah, you definitely want her influencing more children.

BRENDA

Matthew, why are you going through with this and not just running away if you hate Santa so much?

MATTHEW

You saw how quickly they got to us. I need to convince them I'm doing the job so I can get some lead time on an escape plan.

BRENDA

Wow, okay. How can I help?

MATTHEW

I don't want you to get into any trouble.

BRENDA

I appreciate that. You don't need to rush off, you can stay here and get acclimated before you head out.

MATTHEW

Thanks, that's really nice of you but I'm supposed to be on my way to New Jersey. If I linger here they will definitely come looking.

BRENDA

But you barely know the internet.

MATTHEW

I really have to go. Don't get me wrong, you're great... I mean I really didn't expect to like the first human I met.

BRENDA

Glad I could raise your opinion of us.

MATTHEW

Don't get ahead of yourself. I like you, not sure about everyone else!

BRENDA

I'm going to worry about you out there on your own. It's so cold out there.

MATTHEW

Winter is my thing. I mean, it's our only season, at least it was up until a few years ago.

BRENDA

You hungry?

SAME SCENE - LATER

Matthew and Brenda eat Chinese take out.

MATTHEW

This is fucking amazing.

BRENDA

And the really good place wasn't even open.

MATTHEW

You mean there's more than one place?

BRENDA

There's different foods from all over the world.

MATTHEW

Seriously?

BRENDA

Of course. What do you eat?

MATTHEW

Mostly moss and reindeer meat.

BRENDA

Wow, yeah, we have all kinds of choices. They're everywhere. So your train's in about an hour. I don't want to rush you but I know you have to get to New Jersey.

MATTHEW

Yeah, thanks. I appreciate all your help.

BRENDA

Well, you saved my life... and you helped me deal with Greg.

MATTHEW

Did you really care about him? I mean what was it, the sex?

BRENDA

Sex? No, we didn't have sex.

MATTHEW

Wait, so he thought you were going to drop everything and come live on the farm and you hadn't even had sex yet?

BRENDA

Sex isn't everything.

MATTHEW

Maybe not but I mean he probably fucks sheep. You don't know what kinky shit he might be into.

BRENDA

True, but then he didn't know what kinky shit I might be into.

MATTHEW

True. Well, if you ever decide your kinky shit needs an elf with a huge dick, call me.

BRENDA

How am I supposed to do that? You don't have a phone.

MATTHEW

Good point. Write down your number and I'll call you when I get one.

She gets a piece of paper and writes down her number.

BRENDA

When I wake up, will I remember any of this?

MATTHEW

Where do you think you are?

BRENDA  
Honestly? I could be sound asleep  
in an Inn back in Michigan.

MATTHEW  
I hope not, then you have to deal  
with that farm boy shit all over  
again.

Matthew gets up and heads to the door.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)  
Thanks, Brenda, it's been eye  
opening.

She gets up and follows him. They look at each other. She  
gets down on her knees and brings him in for a hug.

BRENDA  
Weird dream, that's for sure.

As she holds him close she feels something. She pushes him  
away and sees the enormous bulge running down his leg.

MATTHEW  
I wasn't kidding.

BRENDA  
Oh my...

Matthew kisses her on the cheek and heads out.

The door closes. Brenda stands up. Pinches herself.

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
I invent the perfect guy and he's  
an elf.

EXT. CHICAGO UNION STATION - DAY

Matthew in the crowd walking toward the station. A large  
black SUV pulls up just in front of him. The passenger side  
door opens right into Matthew's face, knocking him backwards  
off his feet (the man inside not having seen him).

MATTHEW  
Jesus Christ asshole!

The guard, STEPHANE (30's ex-military), in a dark suit, jumps  
out of the car and helps Matthew to his feet.

STEPHANE  
 (Foreign accent)  
 So sorry. Are you hurt?

MATTHEW  
 I'm fine, but you should watch what  
 you're doing dickweed.

The DRIVER (also ex-military), in a dark suit, opens the back door for QUEEN CHRISTINE OF MONROVIA (30's, statuesque, regal).

STEPHANE  
 I apologize. Due to your stature I  
 did not see you behind the door.

MATTHEW  
 I got a train to catch.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
 (Foreign accent)  
 Is there a problem?

MATTHEW  
 Your goon here doesn't look where  
 he's going.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
 I am so sorry. Are you sure you are  
 not hurt?

MATTHEW  
 Yeah, I'm good.

Matthew runs into the station.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
 What an amusing little fellow.

STEPHANE  
 Quite the mouth on him.

INT. CHICAGO UNION STATION - DAY

Matthew goes to a shop and grabs a burner cell phone, hands a credit card to the clerk.

CLERK  
 (looking at card)  
 North Pole Bank? Seriously?

MATTHEW  
 You have a problem?

CLERK

We'll see.

He runs the card. It works.

INT. AMTRAK TRAIN - DAY

Matthew walks through the train, passes the private rooms and sleeper berths to find his coach seat.

Matthew gets comfortable, pulls out his phone and starts searching:

NJ PLASTIC SURGEONS.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Matthew asleep in his seat. A small group of children has gathered around him, staring and pointing.

Matthew wakes.

MATTHEW

What the hell?

CHILD 1

Are you an elf?

MATTHEW

Are you an ignorant undersized human?

CHILD 1

Um... I'm a kid.

MATTHEW

Yeah, I figured that.

CHILD 2

So, are you an elf?

MATTHEW

No, I'm a frickin giant, you dumb ass.

A BUSYBODY WOMAN leans over her seat.

BUSYBODY

Is that really necessary, speaking to the children like that?

MATTHEW

Not as necessary as it is for me to  
tell you to fuck off and mind your  
own business.

She sits down with a HARRUMPH and the children run off.

INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Brenda at her desk scrolling on her computer. She looks at the faculty list of the Political Science Department at UC Berkeley. She does not see the name Halla.

She scrolls to the Contact Us page and makes a phone call.

BRENDA

Hi, I'm hoping you can help me. I'm  
trying to locate a professor, I  
think his name is Halla? No? Well  
it might have been a few years  
back... I see. Well, this is going  
to sound odd but I think he was  
really short. I mean like a dwarf?  
No, I'm not kidding. I met someone  
claiming to be his son and I'm  
trying to connect them if I can.  
Well if there's anyone who has been  
there a long time, maybe they would  
remember him? Yes, I'm Brenda  
Carlson. Please call me if you find  
anything. Thank you so much.

She ends the call. Looks out the window.

INT. AMTRAK BAR CAR - NIGHT

Matthew makes his way through the crowded bar car. A loud-mouthed BROKER BRO is drunk. He's talking to a WOMAN who is not interested.

BROKER BRO

Come on baby, it's a long train  
ride.

WOMAN

Even longer with you around.

They both see Matthew coming through the crowd.

BROKER BRO

Holy shit. Dude, you're like a  
fucking elf!



MATTHEW

Wow, you figured that out all by yourself.

LAUGHTER from a few folks.

BROKER BRO

Are you making fun of me?

He steps in front of Matthew.

MATTHEW

Seriously dude? You think threatening an elf is going to impress this lady?

She shakes her head no. Broker Bro doesn't know what to do.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Let me make this easy for you.

Matthew steps around him and keeps walking.

WOMAN

That was priceless.

Broker Bro can't take it, he turns to follow Matthew.

INT. DINING CAR - NIGHT

Matthew steps into the dining car and takes a quick turn into the men's room.

Broker Bro comes into the dining car and looks around, not seeing Matthew but instead sees QUEEN CHRISTINE sitting alone at a table with STEPHANE standing nearby.

BROKER BRO

Wow, honey, a woman like you shouldn't be dining alone.

Matthew comes out of the men's room and sees this interaction.

Broker Bro is about to sit down when STEPHANE steps over.

STEPHANE

Excuse me sir, this table is taken.

BROKER BRO

Cool it dude, I'm talking to the lady.

STEPHANE

She would prefer to dine alone.

Matthew sees this. He quietly walks over, catches STEPHANE's eye. Matthew kneels down right behind Broker Bro's ankles.

Another PASSENGER starts recording the scene on her phone.

BROKER BRO

Fuck off. I can sit where I want.

STEPHANE

Just not here.

BROKER BRO

Fuck you.

Broker Bro is about to take a swing. STEPHANE pushes gently on Broker Bro's shoulder and it's enough for him to lose his balance and trip over Matthew, falling flat on his back.

BROKER BRO (CONT'D)

You again.

Broker Bro gets to his feet and is about to kick Matthew. Matthew quickly punches Broker Bro's crotch and sends him sprawling to the floor, doubled over in pain.

MATTHEW

You want to go? Really?

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Stephane, will you please escort the young man back to the bar?

STEPHANE

Yes Ma'am.

MATTHEW

I got this.

Mathew puts Broker Bro in a headlock and starts dragging him down the aisle.

STEPHANE

If I may sir?

MATTHEW

Fine, be my guest.

STEPHANE gets Broker Bro to his feet and leads him away.

PASSENGER immediately posts the video on the internet.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Thank you for being of assistance.

MATTHEW  
Can't stand assholes like that.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
I feel the same way, though I don't know that I would have said it quite like that.

MATTHEW  
I tend to say what I think.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
What a luxury that must be.

MATTHEW  
Is that like a, "it's tough being a woman," statement?

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Not exactly. What is your Name?

MATTHEW  
Matthew.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Matthew, would you care to join me for dinner?

MATTHEW  
Sure. You owe me anyway for knocking me over at the station.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
My heartfelt apologies. I would imagine you are often subject to such humiliations.

MATTHEW  
Jeez, sounds even worse when you say it like that.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Forgive me. This is all new territory for me.

MATTHEW  
Me too.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
You're not from around here?

MATTHEW  
No, North Pole.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Oh, how amusing. Do you work for  
the railroad? What a great idea for  
the children.

MATTHEW  
No, I don't work for the railroad.  
I work for Santa.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Indeed? Well Matthew, my name is  
Christine.

MATTHEW  
You always travel with security?

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
I'm afraid so.

MATTHEW  
Why aren't you on a plane?

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Can you keep a secret?

MATTHEW  
Sure.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Parliament won't allow it.

MATTHEW  
Whose Parliament?

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
The Parliament of Monrovia.

MATTHEW  
Why does some foreign Parliament  
give a shit how you travel?

She leans in closely.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
(whispers)  
Because I am their Queen.

MATTHEW  
That's hysterical.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

This coming from a man who wants me to believe he works for Santa.

MATTHEW

Okay, so let's suppose you are who you say you are. What were you doing in Chicago?

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Speaking at a trade conference. Now I'm on my way to the United Nations for a meeting on refugee resettlement.

MATTHEW

A subject near and dear to your heart?

QUEEN CHRISTINE

As a matter of fact it is. If every developed nation took in the same percentage of refugees that we have there would be no crisis.

MATTHEW

Okay, so you're an enlightened despot.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

It seems you are not a fan of constitutional monarchy?

MATTHEW

No. I think nonrepresentative government sucks.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Well, let's agree to disagree so we don't spoil our dinner. Where are you headed?

MATTHEW

I'm on my way to New Jersey to inflict the spirit of Christmas on some unworthy family.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Sounds complicated.

MATTHEW

Most families are. You have any family?

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Not lately.

MATTHEW  
Lately?

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
I recently lost my husband.

MATTHEW  
Sorry.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
I'm not. He died in a hunting  
accident... after a riding  
accident.

MATTHEW  
Wow, that sounds brutal.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
I accidently caught him riding Lady  
Wortley and then I accidently shot  
him while hunting pheasant.

MATTHEW  
Can't believe you're telling me  
this.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Oh, there was an inquest but there  
are advantages to being the Queen.

MATTHEW  
I would imagine.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Matthew and Queen Christine finishing their meal. The dining  
car is emptying out. STEPHANE stands nearby.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)  
Well thank you for dinner.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Yes, you're company was quite  
delightful, even if I don't share  
your views on monarchy. You are the  
most eloquent revolutionary I have  
ever met.

MATTHEW  
I'm guessing you don't dine with  
many revolutionaries.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Well, Matthew, if you should ever find yourself near Monrovia I hope you'll come and visit. Stephane will give you my contact information. By the way, how are you getting to... where was it?

Stephane hands Matthew a card.

MATTHEW

Saddle Ridge.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Stephane, can you arrange for a car and a driver to meet Matthew?

STEPHANE

Ma'am.

STEPHANE steps away and makes a call.

MATTHEW

Thanks, that's very kind of you.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Not all hereditary rulers are terrible. In fact, judging by what's been happening in this country I think monarchy looks increasingly appealing.

MATTHEW

No idea what you're talking about but I appreciate the help.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Good night, Matthew. I wish you luck on your quest.

INT. AMTRAK TRAIN - NIGHT

Matthew gets back to his seat. Most people are asleep. He pulls out his phone and searches:

QUEEN CHRISTINE

He is surprised to see her picture and lots of stories about her and the death of her husband.

EXT. NEWARK TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

Matthew is about the only person to get off in Newark. He makes a phone call.

SPLIT SCREEN WITH BRENDA.

MATTHEW

Hey, Brenda, Matthew here. This is my number.

BRENDA

Hi, wow, wasn't sure I'd ever hear from you again. Where are you?

MATTHEW

I just got to New Jersey.

BRENDA

Oh great. How was the train ride?

MATTHEW

Well let's see, I had to kick some drunk prick's ass... but I did have dinner with a Queen.

BRENDA

You mean like a RuPaul Queen?

MATTHEW

Pretty sure it was a real woman... Queen of some little shithole in Eastern Europe.

BRENDA

I'm sure she appreciated you calling it that.

MATTHEW

I didn't say that to her.

BRENDA

Wow, you're getting more sensitive in your travels.

MATTHEW

Oh fuck no. I did tell her the whole royalty thing was bullshit.

BRENDA

Making friends and influencing people.



MATTHEW

She took it better than I thought she would.

BRENDA

Okay, well Matthew, I wanted to tell you, I tried to find your father.

MATTHEW

You don't need to do that.

BRENDA

I just thought, maybe he's out there.

MATTHEW

Maybe. But he never made any effort to find me so I'm not too interested in finding him.

BRENDA

Berkeley was a dead end anyway. I'm sorry Matthew, I thought I was helping.

MATTHEW

Let me get my plan together and maybe then I'll need your help.

BRENDA

I would love to help, really.

MATTHEW

Is this all because you saw the sled and the other elves?

BRENDA

It's because you are the most unique character I have ever met and I like you.

MATTHEW

You're okay too Brenda.

EXT. NEWARK TRAIN STATION - DAY

Matthew comes out of the station. A big black SUV driven by CLYDE, a huge man in a dark suit and dark sunglasses waits nearby.

CLYDE

You must be Matthew. I'm Clyde.

MATTHEW

Okay, great. How long do I have you?

CLYDE

My orders are to assist you as necessary.

MATTHEW

Cool.

INT. SUV - DAY

Matthew in the passenger seat next to Clyde.

CLYDE

Where to?

MATTHEW

Okay, we have to be kind of discrete about this.

Matthew pulls up a map on his phone.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Let's go to this mall here.

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

The SUV pulls into a space near the mall entrance.

INT. SUV - DAY

Clyde turns off the engine.

MATTHEW

Okay, I'm going to be a little while but whatever you do, don't move the car.

Matthew takes off his hat and places it in the backseat.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(whispers)

They can track me.

Matthew gets out of the SUV and walks away from the mall.

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Matthew climbs over a guard rail at the edge of the mall parking lot and walks to a medical office nearby.

DR. SARAH KIRBY

Plastic Surgeon

INT. MEDICAL CONSULT OFFICE - DAY

Matthew sits on the examination table as DR. KIRBY (40's, Professional) examines his ears.

DR. KIRBY

Extraordinary.

MATTHEW

But can you fix them?

DR. KIRBY

You know, I have had a number of people ask me to make their ears look just like yours.

MATTHEW

Bullshit.

DR. KIRBY

I'm quite serious. Star Trek fans, cosplay fans...

MATTHEW

I have no idea what any of that means. Can you fix them or not?

DR. KIRBY

Well, other than pointiness there's nothing wrong with your ears. But yes, we could reshape them.

MATTHEW

How soon can you do it?

DR. KIRBY

Well, it's bit more complicated by the fact that you don't have health insurance.

MATTHEW

What will it cost?

DR. KIRBY  
I suppose I could make some  
adjustments... Maybe I could get it  
done for fifteen thousand.

MATTHEW  
Dollars?

DR. KIRBY  
Yes. Will that be possible for you?

MATTHEW  
It might.

INT. SUV - DAY

Matthew climbs into the passenger seat.

CLYDE  
Is everything okay sir?

MATTHEW  
Yeah great. Alright, let's get to  
Saddle Ridge.

EXT. PALMIERI HOUSE - NIGHT

A faux-Colonial in a middle class neighborhood. A Catering  
van in the driveway, setting up for a Christmas Party.

Waiters carry racks of glasses into the house.

CLYDE  
What's the plan, sir?

MATTHEW  
Stop the sir stuff, I'm Matthew.

CLYDE  
So Matthew, what's your plan?

MATTHEW  
Why don't you wait here.

Matthew gets out of the SUV.

EXT. PALMIERI HOUSE - NIGHT

Matthew goes to the catering van and grabs a rack of glasses  
and follows a waiter inside.

INT. PALMIERI HOUSE - NIGHT

The place is abuzz with PEOPLE putting finishing touches on the holiday decor and setting up a buffet.

The CATERER, INGRID (50's), directs her staff and keeps an eye on food being prepared. She sees Matthew.

INGRID  
Who are you?

MATTHEW  
Matthew.

INGRID  
The agency didn't mention you.

MATTHEW  
No, kind of a last minute thing.  
They thought I'd bring some holiday  
spirit to the party.

INGRID  
A little early for the costume.

MATTHEW  
I like to stay in character.

INGRID  
Okay, well, make yourself useful.

MATTHEW  
I'll get more glasses.

EXT. PALMIERI HOUSE - NIGHT

Matthew comes to speak to Clyde.

MATTHEW  
I'm good here. You want to come  
back at like nine?

Clyde pulls up a video on his phone.

CLYDE  
You might want to see this.

Clyde hands over his phone. It's the video from the train of Matthew fighting Broker Bro.

NARRATOR

(on phone)

...and the elf kicks this guy's ass  
and it's already got like two  
million views...

Matthew hands him back the phone.

CLYDE

Well done.

MATTHEW

Asshole deserved it.

CLYDE

No doubt. I'll be back at nine.

INT. PALMIERI HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is ready, fully decked out for the party with food  
and drinks. GUESTS arrive in their holiday best.

INGRID

Matthew, maybe you should take  
their coats. Then they see you  
first thing.

MATTHEW

Okay.

People start dropping coats on Matthew and he is quickly  
buried in them. He carries them to a room nearby but mostly  
they are just dragging on the floor.

He tries to put the coats on the bed but he can barely reach  
and they fall to the floor in a heap.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Aw, fuck it.

Matthew goes out to get more coats.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Matthew walks around the party with a tray. KIDS led by  
HEATHER run around.

CHILD 1

Cool Heather, you got your own elf!

MATTHEW

Hey kids, get outta here.

HEATHER

You can't tell me what to do.

MATTHEW

Don't push me you little bi-otch.

Heather and the kids run off.

Matthew approaches TWO COUPLES talking in a corner. They barely notice him. He lingers as they talk, RECORDING THEM ON HIS PHONE which sits on the serving tray he carries.

WOMAN 1

Oh, I think it's terrible. Sandy can barely read and she thinks she should be on the school board.

WOMAN 2

I heard Tony has been doing free work for the Mayor to help her chances.

MAN 1

How does he get all those illegals into City Hall to do the work?

WOMAN 2

Such awful people.

Matthew smiles and walks away. He approaches another group, STILL RECORDING.

MAN

That daughter of theirs is the worst. We've had to go to the school and deal with her bullying more than once.

LADY

Is it any surprise? Her mother is such a terrible person!

MAN 1

Like Tony's any better.

Matthew smiles, moves to another group.

SAME SCENE - LATER

The party winds down. Matthew slips out unnoticed.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

A cheap motel with a single bed.

Matthew eats Italian food while watching TV.

INSERT TV NEWS

A chirpy feel-good evening news program hosted by TARA (30's blonde) and TAD (30's blonde bimbo).

TARA

Well Tad, the holidays are getting weirder and weirder.

TAD

How so Tara?

TARA

Remember that video we showed with the elf beating up the big guy on the train?

TAD

Wasn't that something. Sure don't want to mess with that elf!

TARA

Well Clara May Brown in Dime Box, Texas--

TAD

Haha, I know what a dime bag is but what's a Dime Box?

TARA

It's the name of the town Tad, not really the point here.

TAD

Oh sorry.

TARA

So she found a note in the fruitcake and it said, "Elves exploited by Santa's dictatorship. Please free us from bondage."

TAD

Wow, that doesn't sound very merry!



TARA

No it doesn't. Investigators are trying to determine how the note got in the fruitcake and whether it presents a health hazard.

TAD

But who actually eats fruitcake?

TARA

Lots of people eat fruitcake, Tad.

TAD

Okay, name two.

TARA

Well, there's Clara May Brown and me.

Tad looks stupid.

TARA (CONT'D)

Moving on--

Matthew changes the channel.

EXT. PALMIERI HOUSE - DAY

Matthew hops out of the SUV and goes to the front door, rings the bell.

Tony opens the door.

TONY

Oh, it's you.

Matthew pushes his way in.

INT. PALMIERI HOUSE - DAY

Matthew sits on the couch and pulls out his phone.

TONY

What can I do for you?

MATTHEW

Is Sandy here?

TONY

(calls out)

SANDY?

She comes in, annoyed.

SANDY

What? Oh, what are you doing here?

MATTHEW

Please, have a seat.

They both sit down.

TONY

You want to tell us what's going on?

MATTHEW

You are terrible people.

TONY

Hey, if you don't like being a waiter that's on you pal.

MATTHEW

There was an incident at the mall the other day.

SANDY

Was that you?

MATTHEW

No, but I know that elf and Santa sent me to see if you could maybe become better people, you know, embrace the spirit of giving and all that crap.

TONY

Santa sent you?

MATTHEW

Yeah, and there's a video of that incident at the mall. Do you want to get elected?

SANDY

Of course I do.

MATTHEW

Then it would be best if no one sees that video.

TONY

Are you threatening us?

MATTHEW

Look, I'm going to play you  
something I recorded last night.

Matthew pulls out his phone and plays a few moments from the  
night before.

MAN

That daughter of theirs is the  
worst. We've had to go to the  
school and deal with her bullying  
more than once.

LADY

Is it any surprise? Her mother is  
such a terrible person!

MAN 1

Like Tony's any better.

Matthew stops the playback.

Sandy and Tony look at each other.

SANDY

That was Michelle and Rob.

TONY

Assholes.

MATTHEW

There's more. Really. No one likes  
you.

TONY

Why are you here?

MATTHEW

To see if maybe you can be better  
people...

SANDY

What do you mean?

MATTHEW

I mean you are the most self-  
centered and clueless people. You  
nearly beat an elf because your  
bratty kid didn't want to wait in  
line. What about that do you think  
evokes the Christmas spirit?

TONY

But he touched her.

MATTHEW

No, he didn't. And now I have recordings of just about all your friends saying what terrible people you are and how they really don't like you. I can play more.

SANDY

So what are we supposed to do? Volunteer at a food bank or something?

MATTHEW

That wouldn't hurt, doing something for someone else.

TONY

So what's in it for you?

MATTHEW

Knowing I did my job of spreading the Christmas spirit. Oh, and I need fifteen thousand dollars.

TONY

Get the fuck out of here.

MATTHEW

Okay, I'll put all this from last night and the video from the mall on the internet. Good luck getting elected after that.

Matthew gets up.

TONY

I should kick your ass.

MATTHEW

Want to try?

SANDY

Stop it. Okay, we need to think about this. Give us some time. How do we get a hold of you?

MATTHEW

I'll be in touch.

Matthew leaves.

SANDY

Can you believe the balls on that midget. We should call the police.

TONY

If we do all those recordings will  
come out.

SANDY

I am so angry right now!

TONY

Me too. But I gotta say, he kind of  
reminds me of me when I was  
younger.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Matthew stands in front of a mirror, looks at his ears.

KNOCK on the door. Matthew opens the door and takes the food  
delivery.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Matthew eats sushi with his fingers.

MATTHEW

What even is this?

SAME SCENE - LATER

Matthew pulls out his phone and calls Tony.

SPLIT SCREEN WITH TONY.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Hi Tony, Matthew here. You given  
any more thought to what we talked  
about?

TONY

You're the guy in the video on that  
train?

MATTHEW

I am.

TONY

Look, we don't have fifteen grand  
lying around cause I've already  
spent it on those damn yard signs  
for Sandy's campaign.

MATTHEW

Probably a bad investment.

TONY

But I could use a guy like you in my business.

MATTHEW

Are you offering me a job?

TONY

Yeah. Look, I need someone your size on a lot of the jobs. You can get into places the rest of the crew can't. You'd save me a lot of time and money. And in that video it looks like you're strong.

MATTHEW

Not really what I was expecting.

TONY

We got health insurance.

MATTHEW

Seriously? Shit, then I don't need the fifteen thousand.

TONY

You got health problems?

MATTHEW

Nothing you got to worry about.

TONY

When can you start?

MATTHEW

You still gotta be a better person.

TONY

We're working on it, okay?

MATTHEW

Look, I don't have like work papers...

TONY

You're not American?

MATTHEW

Is that going to be a problem?

TONY

Not for me if it isn't for you.

MATTHEW

Deal.

Matthew hangs up the phone. Turns on the TV.

INSERT TV NEWS

Tad and Tara still chirpy.

TARA

This time the fruitcake with the same note was found in Random Lake, Wisconsin.

TAD

They found it in some Random lake?

TARA

No, that's the name of the town, Random Lake.

TAD

Who found it, Random Person?

TARA

No, it was Hedvig Olson. Authorities are analyzing the note and the FBI is now involved as contaminated fruitcake has been found in multiple states. The FBI has set up a tip-line for information that might help them solve the case.

Matthew turns off the TV.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Matthew, still dressed as an elf, waits as Tony hops out of his van.

TONY

Oh no, you can't let the guys see you dressed like that.

MATTHEW

I don't have anything else.

TONY

Get in, we're going shopping.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Matthew comes out of a dressing room wearing jeans and a tee shirt from the children's section.

MATTHEW

How's this?

TONY

Better.

MATTHEW

Look, I don't have any money.

TONY

I'll spot you.

MATTHEW

Thanks. Look at you being a better person.

TONY

Not really. If you can do what I think you can I'm going to make some serious money.

MATTHEW

How?

TONY

I'm going to charge the same but the work is going to go a lot faster because I'm not going to be tearing out as much stuff to get access. I can send you right into the ductwork.

MATTHEW

Yippee Ki-yay Motherfucker.

TONY

Haha, yeah, Die Hard.

MATTHEW

Great Christmas movie.

TONY

That is not a Christmas movie.

MATTHEW

I guess I can't kick your ass over that comment since you're being nice to me.



INT. TONY'S VAN - DAY

Tony and Matthew drive back to the site.

TONY  
Where are you staying?

MATTHEW  
Cheap motel.

TONY  
We got an apartment in the  
basement. Maybe I can put you up  
there until you save some cash.

MATTHEW  
I don't think Sandy will go for  
that.

TONY  
Well not if you try and shake us  
down again.

MATTHEW  
Why are you being nice to me?

TONY  
Because you're new here and you  
need some help to get on your feet.

MATTHEW  
And you can make some money?

TONY  
Hey, you said we needed to be  
better people, not fuckin saints!

EXT. CHICAGO FBI - DAY

Establishing shot of the sign:

Federal Bureau of Investigations

Chicago, IL

INT. FBI OFFICE - DAY

Agents NEESHA LATTIMER (Black, 30's, smart) and DARRYL  
ANDERSON (30's, White, not too bright) sit at desks facing  
one another.

NEESHA

Okay, here's one you'll love. Greg in Holiday, Michigan, thinks he has some info on the fruitcake notes.

DARRYL

We should go talk to him.

NEESHA

Do not make me visit a place called Holiday.

DARRYL

So call him.

Neesha dials the phone.

SPLIT SCREEN WITH GREG ON THE FARM.

GREG

This is Greg.

NEESHA

Hi Greg, I'm Agent Neesha Lattimer with the FBI.

GREG

Oh, hey, thanks for the call.

NEESHA

So what do you know about the fruitcake notes?

GREG

Well, I'm not sure but like a week ago I was with my ex, Brenda, and this guy, I mean like an elf, comes out of the woods, lost.

NEESHA

An elf?

GREG

He was dressed like an elf, he was like three feet tall and had pointy ears.

NEESHA

Had you been drinking that night?

GREG

No more than usual.

NEESHA

What does this have to do with the notes?

GREG

Well, I'm not sure but he's the same guy that was in that video, you know on the train where the elf beats the shit out of that guy?

NEESHA

Him? Seriously?

GREG

Yeah, so here's the thing, my ex gave him a ride to Chicago.

NEESHA

Where is she now?

GREG

Well, she's an ex so...

NEESHA

Okay, she lives in Chicago?

GREG

Yeah, Brenda Carlson. She might know something about him. They were in the car together for like six hours.

NEESHA

Okay, thanks Greg.

She ends the call.

DARRYL

What do you think?

NEESHA

Let's find Brenda Carlson and see if there's any there there.

INT. SHIPPING STORE - DAY

Matthew puts his elf hat into a box and seals it with tape. He takes out his phone looks at a MAP APP. He zeroes in on Africa, closes in on JUBA, SUDAN and clicks on a random building. He writes on the box:

Mr. Dan Jones

Hai Tarawi

Juba, South Sudan

RHXG+6R

He goes to the counter where a CLERK awaits.

CLERK

Wow, never sent anything there  
before.

Clerk works at his computer for a moment.

CLERK (CONT'D)

How soon do you need this to get  
there?

MATTHEW

No hurry.

CLERK

I need a return address.

MATTHEW

I don't have one.

CLERK

Well, I have to put something.

MATTHEW

Fine, put your address.

The Clerk looks at him, starts typing.

CLERK

Whatever.

INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Brenda at work on her computer when her PHONE RINGS.

SPLIT SCREEN WITH JANICE BURTON (60's, Black, civil rights  
attorney).

JANICE

Is this Brenda Carlson?

BRENDA

Yes?

JANICE

My name is Janice Burton and I understand you were inquiring about a professor at Berkeley?

BRENDA

Yes, thank you for calling. So it's little awkward but I met a guy who told me his father had been a poli-sci professor and he hadn't seen him in years but... This guy, he acts like he's an elf, he's really short and has pointy ears.

JANICE

Niles Frost. He was my mentor. He died about ten years ago. He was something of an oddity, not just the way he looked. He often used bizarre examples, not at all normal in the academic world.

BRENDA

I'm not sure I follow you.

JANICE

Well, when academics write about political upheaval, the call to revolt, that sort of thing, they tend to reference specific real world examples. Like the Russian Revolution or the Arab Spring. But Niles used imaginary places like Santa-land as his example. He wrote that Santa was an exploitive European enslaving an indigenous population.

BRENDA

You mean elves?

JANICE

Indeed.

BRENDA

How did people take that?

JANICE

Well, it was actually genius because his philosophy of revolt was sound and his example was great because it made you think about something in a new way.

(MORE)

JANICE (CONT'D)

I mean not everyone embraced it but as a student I was totally enthralled.

BRENDA

Well here's the thing. This guy thinks his dad was exiled from the North Pole and taught at Berkeley.

JANICE

Did you suggest he might need professional help?

BRENDA

You're going to think I'm nuts too but I kind of believe him.

JANICE

Why?

BRENDA

Well, there's the notes in the fruitcake for one thing.

JANICE

They do reflect what Niles was postulating.

BRENDA

And there was an incident... never mind, it sounds crazy. Anyway, I'm worried that Matthew, that's his name, is going to get into some kind of trouble. He has a real short temper and he seems not really familiar with how things work... like he was raised in a cult or something.

JANICE

Well Brenda, this all sounds very odd but if he is Niles' son I'll help however I can.

BRENDA

Well thank you. I'm not really sure what I'm asking...

JANICE

I'm an attorney. Civil rights typically. If he gets into trouble call me.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Tony's HVAC Van pulls up to the site. Tony and Matthew get out, Matthew, in overalls with a cap pulled over his ears.

WORKERS on the site point to Matthew.

MATTHEW

Yeah, I'm short. You gotta problem with that?

Matthew swaggers onto the site.

TONY

Okay, we got to get this ductwork behind a column.

MATTHEW

Let's do this.

INT. SANTA'S OFFICE - DAY

Santa plays Tetris. Tolppi enters.

TOLPPI

You called sir?

SANTA

Have you heard anything from Matthew?

TOLPPI

No sir. Last we checked he was still in New Jersey.

SANTA

Seems like he should have completed this by now.

TOLPPI

I'll keep an eye on his tracker.

SANTA

Do that. I want to know if he tries to defect.

TOLPPI

What if he does?

SANTA

Well, if he's as smart as his father he'll lay low and we can forget about him.

TOLPPI  
But the fruitcake notes?

SANTA  
Do you think he was behind that?

TOLPPI  
I don't know sir. They were shipped  
just after he left.

Santa looks worried.

INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Brenda working when there is a KNOCK ON HER DOOR.

Brenda looks out the peephole.

NEESHA  
Brenda Carlson? I'm agent Neesha  
Lattimer with the FBI. Can we ask  
you some questions?

Neesha holds her badge up to the peephole.

Brenda opens the door.

NEESHA (CONT'D)  
This is Agent Darryl Anderson. Can  
we come in?

BRENDA  
Sure, what's this about?

Neesha and Darryl look around.

NEESHA  
Nice place.

BRENDA  
Thanks.

NEESHA  
We got a tip that you maybe met a  
guy that might be involved in the  
fruitcake notes?

BRENDA  
I heard about those. Is that really  
an FBI type thing?



NEESHA

Tampering with food products is a felony.

BRENDA

Okay, wow.

NEESHA

So there was a short man I think you may have met in Holiday, Michigan?

BRENDA

Matthew?

DARRYL

Is he the elf guy in the train fight video?

BRENDA

Yeah, that's him.

NEESHA

Do you know where he is now?

BRENDA

He was trying to get to New Jersey.

NEESHA

Do you know why he was going there?

BRENDA

He said Santa sent him to give the spirit of Christmas to some family.

DARRYL

The elf that beat the crap out of some dude on the train? You didn't think that was odd?

BRENDA

Of course I did. Pretty much everything about him was odd.

NEESHA

But you still drove him to Chicago?

BRENDA

Look, he was odd but I never felt threatened or anything. Besides, he kind of helped me get out of an awkward situation there.

NEESHA

With Greg?

BRENDA

What do you know about Greg?

NEESHA

Big city girl goes to small-town for some bullshit event, meets the handsome farm-boy, they fall for each other and then the reality hits that he expects you to give up your life and move to the farm.

DARRYL

That doesn't sound so bad.

NEESHA

White boy.

BRENDA

Yeah, that was pretty much it, but just when it was about to get really awkward under the mistletoe Matthew comes out of nowhere and I have a reason to get out of there and come back to Chicago.

NEESHA

Do you know how we can get a hold of him?

BRENDA

Well, no. I really don't know where he is now. He's kind of clueless. He never heard anything but Christmas songs before and he'd never had anything to eat but reindeer meat and moss.

NEESHA

Do you use recreational drugs Ms. Carlson?

BRENDA

Not since college.

NEESHA

Did you get yourself tested when you got back to Chicago? Maybe he drugged you?

BRENDA

I thought about that.

NEESHA  
Okay, well here's my card.

She hands Brenda a card.

BRENDA  
Listen, I know it sounds crazy but  
what if he's telling the truth?

DARRYL  
What do you mean?

BRENDA  
I mean what if he really is from  
the North Pole? What if those  
fruitcake notes are true? Have you  
thought about that?

They answer simultaneously:

DARRYL  
Yes.

NEESHA  
No.

They look at each other.

NEESHA (CONT'D)  
Seriously?

DARRYL  
Well... I mean it could be true?

Neesha roles her eyes.

NEESHA  
Thank you for your time.

Neesha and Darryl leave.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

When the door closes Neesha and Darryl talk.

DARRYL  
What do you think?

NEESHA  
She's hiding something. We'll tap  
her phone and get a surveillance  
team on her.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Work is wrapping up. Matthew, now dirty, comes out with Tony.

TONY  
Great work today.

MATTHEW  
Thanks. Hey Tony, when does that health insurance kick in?

TONY  
It takes like thirty days. So listen, I spoke with Sandy and we're good with you taking the basement apartment for a few weeks until you get on your feet.

MATTHEW  
Really? She went for it?

TONY  
It took some persuading.

MATTHEW  
I'm afraid to ask.

TONY  
I told her we need to keep our friends close and our enemies closer.

MATTHEW  
So not really a great act of kindness on her part?

TONY  
She don't trust you. Give it time. Oh, but no girls, no smoking and no pets. Bring your stuff to work tomorrow and I'll take you home after.

MATTHEW  
Thanks Tony.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Matthew on his phone.

MATTHEW  
Hey, Doctor Kirby, it's Matthew, the guy with the pointy ears.  
(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I got a job and I'm going to have health insurance in like a month so I'd like to see if we can schedule the surgery.

INT. FBI OFFICE - DAY

Darryl and Neesha on their computers.

DARRYL

Holy crap!

Neesha looks up.

NEESHA

What?

DARRYL

I'm tracing her phone records and you are not going to believe who she talked to yesterday.

NEESHA

Go on.

DARRYL

Janice Burton.

Neesha stunned.

NEESHA

Janice Burton, like former California Attorney General Janice Burton?

DARRYL

Yeah.

NEESHA

Oh shit.

DARRYL

What do you think?

NEESHA

I think she's lawyering up bigtime. We're going to have to take this upstairs.

DARRYL

But it's our lead?

NEESHA

Do you know what Janice Burton will  
do to us?

Darryl shakes his head.

NEESHA (CONT'D)

She will eat us alive. We have to  
get legal involved ASAP.

INT. TONY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tony and Matthew get out of the van. Tony walks him around to  
the back of the house where there is a stairway down to the  
basement door.

INT. BASEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tony comes in and turns on the light. A small studio  
apartment with what would seem like a low ceiling to anyone  
else. It's luxurious compared to the motel.

MATTHEW

This is great.

TONY

Ceilings' a little low... well I  
guess not.

MATTHEW

Thanks Tony. I'll be fine.

TONY

So I told Sandy we should have you  
come up for dinner tonight, you  
know, just to get to know each  
other a little better.

MATTHEW

You don't have to do that.

TONY

Come up at six.

INT. FBI OFFICE - NIGHT

Neesha and Darryl stand in front of Station Director HARRIS  
(60's, dark suit).

HARRIS

I'll tell you what I think. I think this Brenda person and the elf are working together. There's no way she'd hire Janice Burton if she didn't know they were going to be caught up in a shit-storm.

NEESHA

What do you want us to do?

HARRIS

When we locate him, I want no mistakes. I want a SWAT Team. Let's make sure we get him.

INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brenda leaves her apartment and KNOCKS on her neighbor's door. ESTELLE (40's) answers.

ESTELLE

Oh Brenda, is everything okay?

BRENDA

I'm sorry to bother you. My phone died and I need to make a call. Can I borrow yours?

ESTELLE

Sure.

She hands it over.

BRENDA

I'll bring it back in like five minutes.

INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brenda makes a call.

SPLIT SCREEN WITH MATTHEW IN THE BASEMENT APARTMENT.

MATTHEW

Hello?

BRENDA

Hi, Matthew? It's me, Brenda.

MATTHEW

This isn't your number.

BRENDA  
No, I borrowed a phone. I have a lot to tell you.

MATTHEW  
You okay?

BRENDA  
Yeah, no, sort of. The FBI came to see me. They're looking for you.

MATTHEW  
Me? Why?

BRENDA  
They think you have something to do with the fruitcake notes. I think Greg told them something.

MATTHEW  
I never liked that asshole.

BRENDA  
Yeah, well I guess he didn't like you either. I have worse news.

MATTHEW  
Worse than the FBI is after me?

BRENDA  
It's about your father. He died ten years ago.

Silence.

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
He was a professor at Berkeley. He called himself Niles Frost.

MATTHEW  
How'd you find out?

BRENDA  
I spoke with one of his former students. When I said I thought you were Frost's son she offered to help.

MATTHEW  
Well that's nice but I don't know what she can do to help.

BRENDA  
She's big time lawyer.



MATTHEW

Oh, well, under the circumstances  
that could be useful.

BRENDA

Are you okay?

MATTHEW

You mean other than learning my  
father is dead and the FBI is after  
me?

BRENDA

Okay... dumb question. Did you fix  
that family?

MATTHEW

Working on it. And I got a job.

BRENDA

What kind of job?

MATTHEW

I'm doing ductwork for the guy I'm  
supposed to be fixing. I even get  
health insurance.

BRENDA

That's great.

MATTHEW

Yeah, I'm going to get my ears  
done.

BRENDA

What do you mean?

MATTHEW

I mean I'd rather people think I'm  
a human dwarf than an elf.

BRENDA

You're not going back are you?

MATTHEW

Hell no.

BRENDA

I know we barely know each other  
but... I miss you.

MATTHEW

Okay, that's enough of that.

BRENDA

I've never felt so drawn to someone before.

MATTHEW

Because you think I'm a lost puppy?

BRENDA

Because you listen to me. You talk to me. You care about me, at least it seems like you did.

MATTHEW

Brenda, I'm not sure I'm even going to be able to stay here.

BRENDA

I know... but if you do, I'd like to see you again.

MATTHEW

I wouldn't mind seeing you. Look, I gotta go.

BRENDA

Stay safe Matthew.

MATTHEW

Yeah, you too.

They end the call. Matthew stares at the phone, shocked.

INT. SANTA'S OFFICE - DAY

Santa plays Tetris as Tolppi enters.

TOLPPI

Take a look at your tracker.

Santa, irritated, switches his screen to the tracker.

SANTA

Where is he?

Santa sees the red dot somewhere off the coast of New Jersey.

TOLPPI

I'm not sure. Too slow for a plane. He must be on a boat.

SANTA

Where the hell is he going?

TOLPPI

I don't know but he doesn't seem to  
be in any hurry to get there.

INT. TONY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tony, Sandy, Heather and Matthew at the table. Sandy has made spaghetti.

SANDY

I hope you like spaghetti.

MATTHEW

I never had it.

HEATHER

You never had spaghetti?

MATTHEW

Where I'm from there's not a lot of  
food choices?

HEATHER

Where's that?

MATTHEW

The North Pole.

Sandy rolls her eyes.

HEATHER

I'm not stupid. You are not from  
the North Pole.

TONY

So Matthew has been great on the  
job.

SANDY

Good help is so hard to find.

TONY

I'll say. So Matthew, you got  
family?

MATTHEW

No, at least, I don't think so.

SANDY

Were you adopted?

MATTHEW

No, my dad left when I was young  
and my mom, well she died.

SANDY

So your dad might be alive?

MATTHEW

You know what? I'm good on my own.

SANDY

Sounds lonely.

HEATHER

Are you going to stay for  
Christmas?

MATTHEW

We'll see.

TONY

You can't get a landlord to give  
you the time of day during the  
holidays. You should plan to stay  
until New Year's.

MATTHEW

Well thanks. We'll see. I do kind  
of like to keep a low profile.

SANDY

So you're a loner.

MATTHEW

Yes I am.

HEATHER

I can't wait to tell my friends I  
have my very own elf.

SANDY

Heather, remember what I said.

HEATHER

But look at him?

TONY

Heather, Matthew is his own person.  
He is not your elf or anybody  
else's.

MATTHEW

Damn straight.

HEATHER

Matthew called me a bi-otch at the party.

SANDY

He what?

MATTHEW

You were being a little bi-otch.

SANDY

Enough.

TONY

Oh come on, Sandy. You know she can be... headstrong.

SANDY

So you're taking his side?

TONY

How many more people gotta complain about us before you consider maybe we could be, you know.. nicer?

EXT. SADDLE RIDGE - DAY

A bus pulls to a stop and Brenda gets off the bus carrying a suitcase.

A man in a dark suit also gets off the bus, obviously keeping an eye on Brenda. He speaks into a microphone on his wrist.

INT. FBI OFFICE - DAY

Neesha and Darryl at their computers. Harris approaches.

HARRIS

Saddle Ridge, New Jersey. Get there ASAP!

NEESHA

Yes sir.

INT. FBI CAR - DAY

Neesha and Darryl on their way to the airport.

NEESHA

This was not how I planned to spend Christmas.

DARRYL

Me either. But if we catch him  
we'll be heroes.

NEESHA

If we catch him we better hope he  
has some connection to those notes  
or we are going to be toast once  
his lawyer gets involved.

DARRYL

Don't worry, I have a feeling about  
this.

NEESHA

Great. I feel so much more  
confident now.

INT. BASEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Matthew on the phone.

MATTHEW

Okay, so we'll do the surgery on  
Friday, January 7th at 8 am. Thank  
you so much!

Matthew turns on the TV. Tara and Tad back at it.

TARA

It has been two days since the last  
report of a note in a fruitcake.

TAD

That's not news Tara.

TARA

But the fact that the FBI says they  
are closing in on a person of  
interest is news Tad.

Matthew turns off the TV.

INT. TONY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tony, Sandy and Heather decorate Christmas cookies.

HEATHER

We should get Matthew to help us.

SANDY

We should leave Matthew alone. Just because he's staying downstairs doesn't mean he wants to hang out.

TONY

It's Christmas Eve and he's all alone. We could ask.

SANDY

Or we could leave him alone.

TONY

You know what Sandy? When my grandfather came to this country there was an old Jewish guy that helped him out, gave him his first job, helped him get settled.

SANDY

So we're gonna become Jewish?

TONY

No, I'm just sayin Matthew doesn't have nobody here and my family was once like him, that's all.

SANDY

So we have to invite him upstairs because an old Jew helped your Grandfather?

TONY

You know what? Yes, let's just go with yes.

HEATHER

I'll get him!

EXT. BASEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Heather knocks on Matthew's door. Matthew looks out, then opens the door.

MATTHEW

Everything okay?

HEATHER

We're decorating cookies. Do you want to help?

MATTHEW

Not really. Christmas isn't my thing.

HEATHER

Mommy said you came here because we were bad people and didn't know about Christmas but I think you're a bad person because you hate Christmas.

MATTHEW

You're entitled to your opinion.

HEATHER

Stop being a dick and come upstairs.

MATTHEW

You shouldn't be using that kind of language.

HEATHER

Like you give a shit.

MATTHEW

Okay, you know what. Despite my better judgement I kind of like you kid.

HEATHER

Yeah, well I still think you're a dick. So you coming or what?

Heather heads out and Matthew follows. He closes the door without locking it.

INT. TONY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Matthew at the counter decorating cookies.

SANDY

I thought you didn't care for Christmas.

MATTHEW

I don't, but I do like sugar.

HEATHER

Me too!

They smear each other with frosting.



SANDY  
Stop it you two!

SAME SCENE - LATER

Heather sound asleep on the couch. Sandy and Tony sip eggnog as Matthew gets up to go.

MATTHEW  
Okay, look, I'm not good at the whole sentimental thing but thanks for taking me in.

TONY  
Don't worry about it.

SANDY  
Heather seems to really like you.

MATTHEW  
Go figure.

Matthew goes out.

EXT. BASEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Matthew comes in and turns on the light to find Brenda sitting on his bed, wearing a long coat.

BRENDA  
Hi.

MATTHEW  
What are you doing here?

BRENDA  
Nothing yet, but I do have some ideas.

MATTHEW  
Are you nuts?

BRENDA  
Do you have feelings for me?

MATTHEW  
Oh jeez, you know I'm in a shit ton of trouble.

BRENDA  
Shh. Answer my question.

MATTHEW

Are you serious right now?

BRENDA

I haven't been able to stop thinking about you.

MATTHEW

I'm not good at the whole feelings thing.

BRENDA

Why are you making this so difficult?

MATTHEW

Look, I called you didn't I?

BRENDA

You said that if my kinky ever involved a short man with a big dick I should let you know. Well, I'm letting you know.

She opens her coat. She wears very little underneath.

MATTHEW

Oh, wow.

Brenda pulls him onto the bed.

BRENDA

Merry Christmas.

She pulls him in for a kiss.

EXT. TONY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Darryl and Neesha in a sedan parked outside Tony's house.

NEESHA

I knew she was hiding something.

DARRYL

So should we go in?

NEESHA

Not until we get backup.

DARRYL

What if he makes a run for it?

NEESHA  
That's why we're here.

DARRYL  
Merry Christmas.

NEESHA  
You too.

FADE TO:

INT. TONY'S HOUSE - DAY

Heather bounces with energy by the presents under the Christmas tree. Sandy and Tony not thrilled to be up so early.

HEATHER  
C'mon, I want to open one now!

INT. BASEMENT APARTMENT - DAY

Matthew and Brenda curled around each other in bed.

MATTHEW  
You were amazing.

BRENDA  
You're pretty amazing yourself.

The DOOR BURSTS OPEN and a SWAT TEAM rushes in, guns pointed at Matthew and Brenda.

INT. TONY'S HOUSE - DAY

Heather opening presents when they hear A LOUD BANG from downstairs.

SANDY  
What was that?

Suddenly the SWAT TEAM breaks through the doors and windows with guns drawn.

Heather SCREAMS.

TONY  
What the fuck?

EXT. TONY'S HOUSE - DAY

Darryl leads Matthew and Brenda in handcuffs to a waiting black van.

Sandy, Tony and Heather sit on the front steps shivering, being watched over by SWAT team members.

NEESHA

Mr. and Mrs. Palmieri, you're going to have to answer some questions.

SANDY

It's Christmas.

NEESHA

I know, sorry about that.

INSERT TV NEWS

Tara and Tad reporting.

TARA

The FBI says it has apprehended a person of interest in the fruitcake case.

They show a grainy video of Matthew doing the perp walk.

TAD

It's the elf from the train fight.

TARA

I believe it is. And the FBI says he is in the Country illegally.

TAD

Where did they find him?

TARA

New Jersey.

TAD

Why would anyone go there?

TARA

Taylor Pork Roll? Wawa Hoagies? Lots of reasons to visit the Garden State Tad.

Tad looks stupid.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Matthew sits alone in a cell. A pair of short prison guards come to his cell, it's ULF and RAGNILD in disguise.

ULF

Hey you.

Matthew looks up.

MATTHEW

So glad you're here!

ULF

We wanted to tell you, we're on your side.

MATTHEW

What do you mean?

ULF

The notes in the fruitcake.

RAGNILD

This is our chance. You have to tell the truth when you go on trial.

MATTHEW

Wait, you're not here to break me out?

ULF

No way, you can do so much for elf freedom if you just tell the truth in a televised trial.

MATTHEW

I don't give a shit about elf freedom.

ULF

Just your own?

RAGNILD

Your mother died for elf freedom.

MATTHEW

I have a better idea, why don't you guys break me out of here and let's make a better plan.

RAGNILD

Your mother would be so proud.

ULF  
 Good luck!

They leave.

MATTHEW  
 Fuckers.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Darryl and Neesha talk to Brenda who is handcuffed to the table. SENIOR OFFICERS watch from behind a two-way mirror.

NEESHA  
 So you're refusing to cooperate?

BRENDA  
 I want to speak to my attorney.

NEESHA  
 You know Matthew has already blamed you for the fruitcake notes.

BRENDA  
 That's a lie.

DARRYL  
 Why are you protecting him?

BRENDA  
 Lawyer.

NEESHA  
 Aiding and abetting a felon--

BRENDA  
 (sing-song)  
 Law-yer.

A voice from behind the glass.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
 That's enough, get her damn lawyer.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Now it's Matthew in the hot seat.

NEESHA  
 You understand that this all sounds ridiculous.

MATTHEW

Ridiculous is you assholes bringing a fucking SWAT team into Tony and Sandy's house on Christmas morning.

DARRYL

So you're an elf and Santa's a dictator?

MATTHEW

Glad to see you catching up with the conversation, dumbass.

The other agents stifle their laughter.

DARRYL

Watch it shorty.

MATTHEW

What are you going to do? Kick my ass you overgrown limp-dick.

Now it's outright laughter.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Where's my lawyer?

NEESHA

You want us to believe that you are an elf, that this is your first time off the North Pole but you know your rights?

MATTHEW

I've seen some movies.

INT. PRISON OFFICE - DAY

Matthew and Brenda are brought into a room where Janice is waiting. She is shocked when she sees Matthew.

JANICE

Oh my Lord. You look just like Niles!

BRENDA

Janice?

JANICE

Yes, Matthew, I'm Janice Burton. I'll be your attorney if you are interested.

MATTHEW

I can't afford you.

JANICE

This one's on me. Your father was instrumental to my career. Kind of feels like I'm paying him back.

MATTHEW

Okay, so what do we do?

JANICE

Well, Brenda, your case is pretty simple. We'll post your bail and plead not guilty, bargain it down or get it dismissed.

BRENDA

Thank you.

JANICE

But for you Matthew it gets more complicated. Brenda believes you are an elf from the North Pole.

MATTHEW

I am.

JANICE

And that your father was exiled and your mother died in a... fruitcake mine?

MATTHEW

Correct.

JANICE

So if you went back you would likely be subject to some form of retribution?

MATTHEW

Yes.

JANICE

Okay then, we'll apply for Political Asylum.

MATTHEW

What?



JANICE

If your life is in danger in your home country and you enter the United States you are allowed to apply for protection through the Political Asylum process.

BRENDA

But won't he need to prove his life is at risk?

JANICE

Yes.

BRENDA

How is he supposed to do that if no one believes his story? They all think Santa is either a fantasy or some warm and fuzzy saint.

JANICE

We'll need to get an investigation.

BRENDA

Like the police?

JANICE

Or better still, some non-partisan group. Who oversees territorial claims in the arctic?

MATTHEW

Why?

JANICE

Well, if no specific country can claim the North Pole as their own then that makes you legally stateless...

BRENDA

What about the United Nations?

JANICE

That would be great but I don't see how we're going to get the United Nations to look into whether Santa exists and if so, is he enslaving an indigenous population.

MATTHEW

How does that work? Like if a world leader asks them to look into it, would they?

JANICE  
I suppose. Know any world leaders?

MATTHEW  
Can I use your phone.

She hands over her phone. Matthew dials.

SPLIT SCREEN WITH QUEEN CHRISTINE IN HER PALACE.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Hello?

MATTHEW  
Hey, Christine, it's me, Matthew.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
I've been watching the news. It seems you are in a bit of a jam.

MATTHEW  
I am. But I have this kick-ass lawyer and she's going to work it out.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Oh, I certainly hope so.

MATTHEW  
But I need to ask you a favor.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Go on.

MATTHEW  
I want to get the United Nations to investigate conditions at the North Pole.

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Oh, I see...

MATTHEW  
Is there anything you can do to make that happen?

QUEEN CHRISTINE  
Well, I don't think it would be appropriate for me to use what limited political capital Monrovia has at the UN to push for that but I could perhaps get you an opportunity to make your case to the General Assembly.

MATTHEW

You mean like make a speech?

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Yes, would that be helpful?

Janice nods emphatically.

MATTHEW

Yeah, can you do that?

QUEEN CHRISTINE

I can try. The Secretary General once asked me out on a date and I turned him down. I suppose I could revisit his offer now that I'm single again.

MATTHEW

I'd owe you big time.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Indeed you would.

MATTHEW

Hey, make sure you take Stephane on that date, just to be safe.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

I appreciate your concern Matthew. Can I call this number?

MATTHEW

Yes. Hey Christine, you're kind of changing my mind about royalty.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Well to paraphrase a comment you made to me, maybe we don't all suck.

MATTHEW

Thank you.

They end the call.

BRENDA

I did have another thought about Matthew's legal status. What if we get married?

Janice and Matthew both shocked.

JANICE

I don't think a green-card marriage  
is the best idea right now.

BRENDA

No, really. I love you Matthew.  
Will you marry me?

MATTHEW

That's kind of sudden.

BRENDA

Okay, but I know your kink fits  
with my kink.

Janice supremely uncomfortable.

JANICE

I would love to leave you two alone  
but I can't do that, under the  
circumstances.

BRENDA

So?

MATTHEW

I... I never thought about it...

BRENDA

Is that a no?

MATTHEW

No, I mean yes, I mean I'll marry  
you.

They kiss.

JANICE

Okay you kids, slow your roll.  
First things first. Let's get you  
out of jail and let's write you a  
speech for the United Nations.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Matthew (wearing an electric ankle bracelet) and Brenda in  
bed. Brenda ends a phone call.

BRENDA

That was Janice. You have a date at  
the UN on January 7th.

MATTHEW

No shit?

BRENDA

None. But isn't that when you're scheduled for surgery?

Matthew touches his ears.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

I like them just the way they are.

MATTHEW

I was thinking I'd fit in better if I had them fixed.

She kisses his ear.

BRENDA

There's nothing to fix. And who cares about fitting in?

MATTHEW

I'll cancel the surgery.

BRENDA

Don't do it for me. If you really want to do it I'll support you.

MATTHEW

You're the best... I... I...

BRENDA

You don't have to say it. I know how I feel about me.

He leans in and whispers.

MATTHEW

I love you.

They kiss.

INT. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY - DAY

Matthew at the podium in his full elf costume (standing on a box so they can see him).

MATTHEW

All I am asking is that this body consider an inquiry into the conditions of the elves at the North Pole.

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I know investigating Santa, a  
bedrock fantasy of millions, is  
fraught with peril.

INT. SANTA'S OFFICE - DAY

Santa and Mrs. Claus stare at Matthew giving his speech on  
Santa's computer screen. They could not look more horrified.

INT. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY - DAY

Back to Matthew's speech.

MATTHEW

But I ask you to consider, if  
countries today enslaved people the  
way they did in previous centuries,  
would you not act? Would you not  
come to the aid of those in need?  
Thank you for allowing me to  
address you today.

As Matthew steps down he gets a standing ovation.

INT. GREEN ROOM - DAY

Matthew enters and Janice, Brenda, Tony, Sandy, Heather and  
Queen Christine stand and applaud.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

Marvelously done.

BRENDA

I'm so proud of you.

MATTHEW

Yup, now I'll be the elf who killed  
Christmas.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

You know, after revolutions the  
work of the country must continue  
under new leadership.

TONY

Whaddya mean?

QUEEN CHRISTINE

I mean, if Santa were deposed, it doesn't mean the elves can't run Christmas without him. They just need some leadership.

MATTHEW

Yeah, none of us have much experience with that.

QUEEN CHRISTINE

I beg to differ. I think you have exemplified extraordinary leadership.

MATTHEW

Oh shit, Oh no.

Matthew backs away shaking his head but we all know what's going to happen. (In the sequel.)

**THE END**