12/24

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INT. PLATT'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Over the Perry Como version of SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN, we watch the HOME VIDEO of a lower middle class family on Christmas.

Starts off TWELVE YEARS AGO when the camera's first turned on, right out of the box. A freshly unwrapped present.

*A sweet woman with big, loving eyes, **CLAIRE**, smiles wide as the operator uses his new gift. ZOOMS IN on his three-year-old son, TEDDY, as he opens his own present.*

*The operator, **DOUG MACKAY**, films himself giving his wife a big hug and kiss. He's a husky guy, lots of energy and it's clear that his family means everything to him.*

After that, we get a...

MONTAGE OF CHRISTMAS OVER THE YEARS...

All through the video camera. Teddy gets his first bike. Claire opens a box with a BEAUTIFUL NECKLACE. Tears up.

CLAIRE
(mouthing)
We can't afford this.

- Now another BABY has joined the family. Claire opens a present on his behalf. A FISHING POLE. Doug has high hopes.

- The younger boy, WILL, is up and running and the TWO BROTHERS are forced to show off their ugly CHRISTMAS SWEATERS. They're wild and full of energy.

- Claire takes a tray of FRESHLY BAKED COOKIES out of the oven and the boys put them on a plate for Santa. Doug grabs for one and his hand is smacked away.

- They visit SANTA AT THE MALL. Doug crushes up a CANDY CANE and gives it to Will, who feeds the LIVE CARIBOU they have in their display.

- An EIGHT-YEAR-OLD TEDDY unwraps a SWISS ARMY KNIFE. Claire glares at Doug. Inappropriate present.

- The boys are getting older. Will sings a sweet Christmas Song and Teddy pops into frame to tease him. Will shoves him away and Doug scolds the kids. Makes them hug it out.

- Doug is clearly the glue that holds the family together. He holds Will as he tries out his new bicycle. Struggling to keep it balanced, until he rights it and Doug CHEERS him on.

INT. WILL'S ROOM - DAY

OBJECTIVE POV: As **WILL** watches the video on the small camera screen. He's eleven-years-old now. Earnest, endearing. He watches with a mixture of nostalgia and sadness.

Pops out the tape and digs around a bin of tapes until he finds another. Perfect. Pops it into the camera and mounts it on a tripod.

CAMERA POV: Will addresses the camera.

WILL
Dear Santa. This is Will MacKay. Eighteen Bridge Street, Lowell, Mass. Just wanted to say that I've been really good this year. I know my grades dipped for a while but I got 'em back up. All B's. I helped out Mom a lot. She's been working two jobs so... I start dinner three times a week. Take out the trash. I don't get into any trouble. When Dave Myers wanted to egg those houses on Cabbage Night I didn't go. Not that I'm ratting out Dave Myers. He's mostly a good kid. Anyway, I'm not asking for much...
(excited)
Just a Razor RipStik Caster Board! You know, the black one with the silver stripes? Brandon lets me take a turn on his every once and a while, but it would be really cool to have one of my own. Okay, that's it, I guess...
(thinking)
Oh, and listen... I know my brother Teddy has been making some bad decisions lately. Maybe if there's some way that you could overlook a couple of 'em and keep him off the naughty list. Just this year? He really took, you know, everything with Dad really hard and--

WHUNK! Will gets nailed in the head by a soda can.

WILL (CONT'D)
Ow! What the hell, Teddy?

TEDDY walks into frame. He's fifteen-years-old and legitimately tough. Army jacket. Patriot's shirt.

You know this kid's gonna be smoking in a year or two if he isn't already.

TEDDY
Were you just talking about me?

Will immediately goes into defensive mode.

WILL
Why would I talk about a dumb idiot loser?

Teddy walks to the camera and Will leaps up to defend it.

WILL (CONT'D)
Cut it out, Teddy! Just leave me alone!

OBJECTIVE POV: As Teddy and Will fight over the camera.

TEDDY
You know you're not supposed to use Dad's video camera.

WILL
Says who?

TEDDY
Me, that's who.

Teddy has the height advantage and watches the PLAYBACK on the tape. His eyes widen.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Oh, my God!

WILL
Give it back, Teddy!

TEDDY
You made a video letter to Santa? Classic!

WILL
Get out of here!

Teddy shoves him onto the bed.

TEDDY
And how were you planning on getting this to him? Were you actually gonna waste a stamp on it? Man, are you stupid.

WILL
You're stupid! I can upload it to the school computer and E-mail it straight to Santa's website!

Teddy has a revelation.

TEDDY
Wait a second... You really still--

WILL
Still what?

Will has no idea what he's talking about. Teddy considers dropping the bomb but holds back.

TEDDY
Just get out of here.

WILL
No! It's my room too.

TEDDY
Get out! Now!

Teddy grabs him by the neck and shoves him out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The door SLAMS behind Will. He POUNDS to get back in.

WILL
You're a real jerk! You know that?

He puts an ear to the door. A beat, then he hears TEDDY TALKING TO SOMEONE on the phone. Will gets an idea.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Will climbs up a small fence, onto a small tree in front of their ROW HOUSE. Behind him, we see the ROWS OF HOUSES in this old New England middle class neighborhood.

He deftly maneuvers onto a wide ledge, shimmies to the bedroom window and turns the camera on.

CAMERA POV: He aims the camera through the window, where Teddy lies on the bed, talking on the phone. Teddy fiddles with the POCKET KNIFE Doug gave him in the opening montage.

Will quietly opens the window and ZOOMS IN on his brother.

TEDDY
(into the phone)
C'mon, don't say that. We'll figure it out. Lots of people have long distance relationships...

As Will ZOOMS IN on the wall over Teddy's bed, we notice PHOTOS taped to the headboard of Teddy and a CUTE GIRL. One pic of them going to a dance.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
I think you're gonna change your mind when you get my present... Should be there any day now. Must take a few days to get all the way to Miami.
(sigh)
It's just not the same here without you... I, like, really miss you.

He's sincere. It's a tender moment and we feel for this kid.

Will GIGGLES OFF SCREEN and gives himself away. Teddy notices and becomes enraged.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
I'll call you back. Got a brother to murder.

Will makes KISSING SOUNDS.

WILL
Oh, baby. I miss you soooo much!

Will tries to scurry away but Teddy's fast. Reaches out onto the roof and pulls him into the room.

INT. WILL AND TEDDY'S ROOM - DAY

Teddy SLAMS Will into the shelf. Books spill over.

WILL
Hey, take it easy.

TEDDY
I am so sick of you!

WILL
What, you can dish it but you can't take it!

TEDDY
You're such a little baby.

WILL
You're the one who can't take a joke.

Teddy gets an idea.

TEDDY
Know what? It's time you grew up.

Teddy lets go of Will and grabs the video camera.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Wait a second. I gotta get this on tape. Record it for posterity. The day you became a man!

CAMERA POV: Teddy ZOOMS IN on Will.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Will, as your older brother, it's my job to instill you with the important lessons of life. So, here it goes...
(poignant pause)
There's no such thing as Santa Claus.

Will reacts. Defensive.

WILL
Knock it off, Teddy.

TEDDY
No, it's true. No such thing. The fact that you still believe it is *staggering*.

WILL
Dad believed it.

TEDDY
Are you honestly telling me that you believe some fat dude rides in a sleigh with a bunch of deformed flying elk and is somehow able to give presents to every kid in the world in one night?

WILL
Every kid *not* on the naughty list.

TEDDY
There is no naughty list! There is no nice list! It's just a load of BS parents tell their kids so they'll behave.

Will considers it. Doesn't want to believe it's true.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
It's time you stopped wetting your diapers and grew up already.

Will fills with anger.

WILL
Arggh!!!

Will charges across the room and SLAMS into Teddy.

INT. STAIRWAY - DAY

OBJECTIVE POV: They both spill down the narrow stairway.

Teddy tumbles head over heels and kicks over a small table in the foyer. Breaks a PICTURE IN A FRAME. It's of Doug, smiling. Teddy reacts, red with anger.

TEDDY
You are so dead.

Teddy dives into Will...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

They roll around on the floor, beating each other up. A little more aggressively than normal brother stuff. They knock into the CHRISTMAS TREE and it topples over on both of them. Teddy shoves it off. Pine needles in his hair.

TEDDY
I hate you!

WHUNK! Teddy shoves Will's head hard against the floor. Will reacts, tears in his eyes.

WILL
I wish you died instead of Dad!

Whoa...

Will regrets saying it even before it leaves his mouth. Teddy reacts - shocked. SMACKS him across the face. And, filled with emotion, keeps smacking him...

Until Claire walks through the door in a waitress uniform, carrying a sack of groceries.

CLAIRE
Whoa-whoa-whoa! What the hell is going on here!?! Teddy!

Claire pulls Teddy off his brother. Will has a bloody nose.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Is this what happens when I'm not here? You tear each other apart like wild animals?

Teddy shrugs her off, breathing heavy.

TEDDY
He started it!

WILL
He started it! He said there's no such thing as Santa Claus.

TEDDY
'Cause there isn't, baby!

WILL
Yes, there is! Tell him, Ma!

He looks to Claire to have his back.

WILL (CONT'D)
Tell him there's a Santa Claus...

She isn't sure she wants to squash his dreams but isn't in the mood to lie either.

TEDDY
Come on, Ma. The kid's ten years old and was using Dad's camera to make a video for Santa.

WILL
And he was talking to his little girlfriend on the phone for like twenty minutes!

Claire glares at Teddy.

CLAIRE
Is that true?

Teddy socks his brother in the arm for being a snitch.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Teddy, I thought we talked about this. Long distance calls are expensive.

TEDDY
I know. But that's why I want that laptop. Skype is free.

She looks at him like he's got two heads.

CLAIRE
Teddy, we don't have money for a computer. I'm barely keeping the lights on right now as it is.

Teddy reacts, really disappointed. Claire is clearly overwhelmed by life. Barely keeping it together.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Look kids, I try not to worry you about this stuff, but... If things don't get better soon...

She turns away so they can't see how worried she is. Takes a deep breath and pulls herself together.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I want you to clean this place up and set the table. If I hear one word out of either of you, you're grounded for the rest of the year.

She notices the broken picture of Doug and picks it up. Filled with emotion.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
You boys want to know what to believe in? Believe in each other. 'Cause we're all we got.

She leaves them to cook on that one. The boys hang their heads, feeling terrible about causing their mom grief.

Will starts cleaning up in silence and Teddy helps.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: *A HOME VIDEO from a few years ago of Claire putting presents under the Christmas tree. Doug is filming.*

DOUG
Hey, cutie. Any chance I can open my present a little early?

CLAIRE
I don't know... Have you been naughty or nice?

DOUG
Oh, I've been a verrrrry good boy.

He dangles some MISTLE TOE in front of the camera.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Hey! Where'd that come from?

He sets the camera down and scoops her up. They kiss. He starts SINGING 'LET IT SNOW' and dancing with her.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Oh, the weather outside is frightful...

CLAIRE
Shh! You'll wake the kids!

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

OBJECTIVE POV: Will sits in the empty tub, watching the video on the camera's screen. Longing for those times.

DOUG (O.S.)
Hey! Do we have any more of that eggnog left?

Will's attention starts to drift a little when he notices something on the video. Almost lets it go but decides to STOP IT and REWIND.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: *He REWINDS the scene and starts again as his father opens the fridge.*

DOUG
Hey! Do we have any more of that eggnog left?

We barely notice something happen in the background. Way back in the living room by the tree.

Will STOPS and REWINDS the tape again. We ZOOM IN closer to see what he's focused on...

Just after his dad opens the refrigerator door, just underneath, way back in the living room...

A HAND PLACES A PRESENT UNDER THE TREE.

It happens so quickly. And then Doug takes a pitcher out of the fridge, closes the door and the living room is empty.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Just grab those cookies and let's go upstairs...

CLAIRE
You're kidding right?

DOUG
What do you mean?

CLAIRE
The cookies are gone.

Doug pauses and looks around.

DOUG
Boy, that Santa sure moves fast! Not that I blame him. You make the best cookies on Earth!

Claire GIGGLES and Doug shuts off the camera.

Will REWINDS. Stops at the moment. Sees the hand again place the present. PAUSES it.

OBJECTIVE POV: As he sits back, wide-eyed. Wondering.

INT. WILL AND TEDDY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Teddy is playing a handheld video game, zoning out. Will approaches him with the camera.

WILL
Hey, Teddy...

No answer.

WILL (CONT'D)
Can I show you something?

Teddy is giving him the silent treatment.

WILL (CONT'D)
Come on, Teddy. I need you to look at this.

He tries to think of something to get his attention.

WILL (CONT'D)
I'll shovel the stairs for you.

TEDDY
For two snows.

Will considers this.

WILL
Deal.

Teddy snaps up from the video game.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Will plugs the camera into the television.

TEDDY
This better be good.

The HOME MOVIE plays. Teddy immediately responds to seeing his parents together. Unlike Will, watching this only makes him uncomfortable.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
I told you to stop watching this stuff.

WILL
Just look at this...

Will gets up to the screen and points.

WILL (CONT'D)
As soon as Dad opens the fridge. Watch this corner of the screen.

We watch the moment.

WILL (CONT'D)
There!

Teddy reacts. Curious.

TEDDY
Play it again.

Will plays the tape and sure enough, there's the hand. Teddy tries to think of what it could be.

Will REWINDS -- runs it in SLOW-MO -- and FREEZES the hand image. The image is blurry, but the hand looks old -- with the faintest hint of a red and white coat sleeve.

WILL
It's clearly a hand. Reaching under the tree and leaving a present.

He crosses his hands like he just presented the final piece of evidence to a jury.

TEDDY
Yeah, but...
(reaching)
There's gotta be an explanation. Maybe it's a shadow.

WILL
Does that look like a shadow to you?

TEDDY
Maybe it's Uncle Mark.

WILL
Uncle Mark never came over on Christmas Eve! They always drove up the next day! And why wouldn't Mom or Dad acknowledge him at all?

He scans the living room. The same one on the tape.

WILL (CONT'D)
He would have had to be standing up against the wall, flat like this...

Will stands flush against the wall. Realizes..

WILL (CONT'D)
Or in the chimney! Oh, my God! I just got goosebumps!

TEDDY
Just take a chill pill, would ya? And let me think.

Teddy is truly stumped.

WILL
We should show Ma.

TEDDY
Show Ma a video of her and Dad getting all mushy on Christmas Eve? Are you nuts?

Teddy thinks it over. Looks around the room. Stares at the closet across from the fireplace and gets an idea.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Alright. If I were to get involved with this -- and I'm not saying I am -- I would need some very special, high-end equipment.

WILL
Do you know where we could get it?

TEDDY
(reluctant)
Maybe. But there is no *we*. I call all the shots. And you need to promise you won't tell *anybody* about this. Not even Ma.

WILL
I swear.

Teddy SIGHS DEEPLY. Already regretting it. Then, off the MYSTERY HAND frozen on the TV -- we GO TO:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET, LOWELL, MASS - DAY

It's a cold, grey December day. Teddy walks down his block, the wrong side of the tracks of a dying industrial town. Houses have shoddy Christmas decorations up.

He stops in front of a RUN-DOWN HOUSE and has pause about entering. Puts on a tough face and rings the BUZZER.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Teddy enters an apartment and is greeted by JACOB, an especially intimidating kid. Long hair. A few years older with a scar above his left eye.

JACOB
Teddy! Come on in, my man.

They shake hands and bump chests. The apartment is dingy and unkempt. No sign of parents anywhere. Other OLDER KIDS play XBox on a crappy tube television.

TOUGH KID #1
Hey, T-Down. You still with that girl?

TEDDY
Nah. Her father moved them to Miami. Got some big job at a hospital.

JACOB
Probably just an excuse to get her as far away from you as possible.

TEDDY
He definitely wasn't a fan.

TOUGH KID #1
Too bad. She was fine.

TOUGH KID #2
And rich. You ain't ever gonna do better than that!

Jacob throws an arm around Teddy and takes him into the...

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A bunch of STOLEN ELECTRONICS are piled around the room.

JACOB
What'd you say you needed this stuff for again?

TEDDY
School project.

JACOB
I hate school.

Jacob lays out a few items on the bare mattress. Camera lenses. Some sophisticated electronics. Teddy eyes a BB GUN on the night stand. Goes to pick it up.

JACOB (CONT'D)
That's off limits. You can borrow anything else for the week... But you'll owe me.

TEDDY
How d'you mean?

Jacob looks him in the eyes. Gets serious.

JACOB
Next time something comes up, you gotta be 'in'. No more backing out.

Teddy considers the implications of this proposition. Nods, reluctantly. Jacob pats him on the back and leaves the room.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Will is doing homework and Teddy walks in with a full pack.

TEDDY
I got the stuff...

INT. WILL AND TEDDY'S ROOM - DAY

Will stands behind Teddy as he unzips the backpack.

TEDDY
Stand back... Further... You can't touch anything.

Teddy takes out a PACK OF TAPES and a LENS BOX.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Twelve hours worth of digital tape. Night vision lens.

He screws it on the camera. Perfect fit. Pulls out WALKIE TALKIES. A roll of THIN LINE with several fasteners.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Tripwire.

WILL
Sick! Where does Jacob get all this stuff?

TEDDY
(beat)
Internet.

Teddy pulls out the BB HAND GUN. Will goes wide eyed.

WILL
What's that for?

TEDDY
I don't know... Fun.

WILL
You've got some really creepy friends.

TEDDY
At least I got friends, loser.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Teddy unscrews the doorknob from the closet door with his pocket knife. Fits the camera into the hole. Perfect fit. He looks at Will who's carving a hole in a fireplace log.

TEDDY
No, you gotta make the holes deep enough to hide the fastener.

Teddy grabs the log away from Will and carves a hole into it. Places the end of the tripwire into the hollow log and sets it down carefully on the fireplace grate.

WILL
But won't that be the first thing he sees if he comes down the chimney?

TEDDY
If there really is a Santa Claus, he's not gonna be expecting two kids to be planting military-grade tripwire.

He slowly depresses the thin wire, which winds around the grate to an electronic sensor. The SENSOR turns red.

WILL
Yeah, but maybe if we just put it over here, out of eyesight--

TEDDY
Just leave me alone and let me do this.

WILL
Hey. This is my thing! You wouldn't even be doing this if it wasn't for me!

TEDDY
Do you want me to help you or not?

Will considers it.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Cause I can take all this stuff back to Jacob's and forget this whole thing ever happened...

Will relents. There's a KNOCK at the door.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

Teddy answers and a MAILMAN is standing there with a PACKAGE. Teddy sees what it is and freaks out.

TEDDY
Hey, I sent this out two weeks ago!

MAILMAN
Returned delivery. Wrong address.

TEDDY
But this had to get there *today*. It's a Christmas present!

MAILMAN
Sorry. Bring it to the post office on Monday and they'll rectify it. Merry Christmas!

The mailman walks off leaving Teddy with the small package, addressed to "GRACE TANNER" in Miami, crestfallen. Will feels bad but pretends to not have overheard the interaction.

EXT. BRIDGE STREET - LATER

Wind blows the Christmas lights draping their doorway. People on their block are bringing home bags of presents, CAROLING, and doing last minute Christmas preparations.

INT. WILL AND TEDDY'S ROOM - DAY

Will and Teddy are hanging out in their room. A KNOCK and Claire sticks her head in. She's in her waitress uniform.

CLAIRE
I'm heading out. Working until eleven. I want both of you asleep by the time I come home or you're coming to Midnight Mass with me.

Teddy visibly tenses up at the thought of this.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
It's time we start doing the things we used to do as a family again.

WILL
Okay, Ma! See you later!

She reacts. Feels guilty for having to leave them.

CLAIRE
No pop tonight and absolutely no junk food. Understand?

WILL
Sure thing, Ma! See you in the morning. Bright and early!

CLAIRE
Okay. G'night. Love you.

She kisses both of them on the head and leaves. The boys listen as she leaves the house before they...

Spring into action! Will stuffs pillows under his blanket.

TEDDY
What're you doing that for?

WILL
(singing)
He knows when you are sleeping. He knows when you're awake.

TEDDY
You're seriously overthinking this.

Teddy thinks about it and follows suit.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Teddy unscrews the doorknob from the closet. Sets up the camera on the tripod.

TEDDY
Here, let's test it out.

CAMERA POV: The NIGHT VISION is on. The date and time appears in the corner of the screen...

"12/24. 10:23PM". Will steps into frame.

WILL
Can you see me?

TEDDY (O.S.)
Yeah. Now go over by the chimney.

Will pretends that he's Santa Claus.

WILL
Ho, ho, ho! Mer-ry Christmas!

He takes a cookie off the tray and savors it.

WILL (CONT'D)
Mom makes the best cookies in the Universe....

TEDDY
Well, don't eat 'em all! And move the plate over to the... Perfect!

Will walks over to the tree. Pretends to place a few presents and looks over at the closet. *Good?*

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Will lays on a sleeping bag and pillows. Teddy walks in with a bag of candy, a bowl of popcorn and some pop.

WILL
Hey! Ma said no junk food!

TEDDY
Gotta stay up somehow. If you want to get what you want in life, you gotta break the rules sometimes.

Will considers this. Grabs a handful of CANDY CANES.

WILL
I got the first three books of Ultimate X-Men.

TEDDY
Lamest Christmas Eve ever...

Will lays a towel under the door.

WILL
So he can't see the light.

Teddy rolls his eyes. Will sits, filled with excited energy.

CUT TO:

A WHILE LATER.

Teddy fidgets with the returned package. SIGHS and pockets it. Picks up a comic book. Will keeps checking the lens.

TEDDY
Would you chill out? You're making me anxious. If he hits that tripwire, the phone'll vibrate.

He holds up an old iPhone. Will nods. Sits down.

WILL
Remember that one year when Dad wasn't supposed to be home for Christmas? He was running a haul down to Memphis, I think. Mom was trying to pretend like it didn't bother her, but she was sad. We all were. And then, right when we were finishing up dinner... There he was. Said he drove the entire night through. Got four speeding tickets. But he made it home.

Teddy barely grunts.

WILL (CONT'D)
It just somehow wouldn't be Christmas without him.
(catching himself)
Isn't--

TEDDY
Are you gonna prattle on like that all night? I'm trying to read here.

WILL
Sorry. It's just... It's weird. Right?

Teddy puts the comic book down. Sincere.

TEDDY
It's weird.
(beat, lightening)
You're weird. What do you say you take the first shift? I'm gonna get a little shut eye.

WILL
Good idea.

Teddy curls up and closes his eyes. Will dwells on something. Stands up and looks through the lens. Nothing.

Sits back down and thumbs through a comic. Rubs the sleep out of his eyes and yawns. Drinks some pop.

CUT TO:

LATER IN THE NIGHT.

Teddy is fast asleep. SNORING a little.

PANNING across the closet, so is Will. He couldn't stay awake. The house is quiet.

And then we hear a CREAK. Like the house settling. And a little bit of SHUFFLING. Like an animal behind the wall.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: The living room is completely still. More SHUFFLING but nothing too interesting. This plays out for maximum tension...

Until we see a little bit of dust drop down the chimney. And then a little more...

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

OBJECTIVE POV: Will is asleep. Suddenly, the phone starts to VIBRATE. He stirs. It keeps vibrating and he wakes up. Gets his bearings and stares at the phone groggily.

Realizes... *Holy shit!* Hears someone just outside the closet. Rises up to the camera's viewfinder...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: The room looks still, but something seems strange. Will ZOOMS IN on the tray and sees...

The milk and two of the cookies are gone!

Before he can process this, we see the clear SHADOW OF A MAN coming from the side of the tree out of frame.

OBJECTIVE POV: Will's eyes widen. He takes the camera off the tripod...

CAMERA POV: SCANS the room slowly, until he lands on...

SANTA CLAUS

And not some bullshit, Norman Rockwell version of Santa. THE fucking Santa Claus. A husky lumberjack of a man. His outfit more functional than campy. Sack of toys beside him. All caught on night vision video.

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Stunned, Will turns around and taps Teddy.

WILL
(faint whisper)
Teddy... Teddy...

Finally, he kicks him. Teddy snaps awake and Will slaps a hand over his mouth. Teddy is just about to shove him away when Will's look (off screen) says it all.

Despite taking part in all this, Teddy is still skeptical. *It can't possibly be real.*

Then he hears the CREAK of someone walking outside. Grabs the camera away from will, looks through the viewfinder... And is floored by what he sees...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Santa eats the remaining cookies, savoring each one just like Will had earlier. He seems very real but also a little larger-than-life. Like he's glowing the slightest bit.

He pockets the last cookie, looks around the room and then crawls back into the fireplace.

And suddenly, WHOOSHES back up the chimney like a ghost.

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Teddy is awestruck. Will waits with baited breath.

WILL
What's he doing? What's he doing?

TEDDY
Let's go!

Teddy bursts out of the closet.

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Teddy barrels out the front door and looks up at the roof. Can't see anything. It's way too dark. Will sprints out and can't see either. Teddy looks through the viewfinder.

CAMERA POV: He points the camera up at the roof. Nothing. Points it at the neighboring rooftops. Nothing.

TEDDY
I don't see anything.

Will realizes.

WILL
The Jamesons don't have kids! The Goldbergs don't have a tree...

TEDDY
(thinking)
The Collards!

Teddy aims it four roofs down and catches a QUICK GLIMPSE OF A MAN disappearing down the chimney.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Holy crap!

WILL
We can see better from the alley!

The two boys run back into the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They run through the living room and Will scoops up the backpack. Teddy throws his boots on.

WILL
Come on! Quick!

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

The camera is shaky as they run across their small yard and out the back gate.

WILL
Hurry!

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Teddy catches up to Will as he freezes in his tracks, his jaw on the ground, as he peers up to the sky - in complete awe.

WILL
Holy shhhh--

TEDDY
What?

Will then directs Teddy's camera upward, his brother pointing his camera to the clouds, eyes becoming like saucers, as into sharp focus comes:

SANTA'S SLEIGH

Hovering about twenty feet off the ground, miraculous and huge, with two long runners... *The real deal*.

WILL
Tell me you're getting this.

TEDDY
Oh, yeah...

This magical, iconic ride just within reach. Ted approaches slowly, filming every angle, getting a better look at...

The EIGHT REINDEER

bobbing ever so slightly to keep it afloat.

WILL
It's more beautiful than I imagined...

Teddy ZOOMS IN on each one, studying the scene like a nature documentarian. Then he sees:

SANTA

climb out of the chimney and jump impossibly from rooftop to rooftop. Crawls down another chimney and the sleigh moves incrementally to keep up.

TEDDY (O.S.)
I can't believe it... I just can't believe it!

That's when he notices Will running after it.

TEDDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Wait!

They catch up to the sleigh and Will stares up at it in awe.

WILL
Eight reindeer! Dad always said Rudolph was bullcrap...
(to Teddy)
Can I see?

Will grabs the camera and climbs up the fence. Pulls himself up onto a small TOOL SHED.

TEDDY
Hey! Come back!

Will climbs the fence and then crawls up on the tool shed. He's about one floor down from the sled. But there's a TELEPHONE POLE nearby with foot pegs.

[ALL THEIR COMMUNICATION IS IN A HEATED WHISPER].

Teddy grabs Will's pant leg.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

WILL
You know how important this tape is to all the children of the world? Everybody who isn't sure if he exists?

TEDDY
Get down here before I pull you down.

WILL
No, suh! I'm just gonna get a better look.

All of a sudden, they hear something. Will points the camera at the roof and catches Santa hopping out of the chimney. He jumps to the next house and goes inside.

Will pulls his leg out of Teddy's grip.

WILL (CONT'D)
He's almost done with our street!

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S YARD - NIGHT

Will climbs up the pole and gets even with the sleigh.

The reindeer BLEAT nervously but wait for Santa. Seeing it through the night vision gives it all credibility.

WILL
This is really happening.

He climbs a few pegs until he's looking down on the sleigh.

WILL (CONT'D)
Here goes nothing...

EXT. SANTA'S SLEIGH - NIGHT

He jumps into the sled and lands with a THUD. The reindeer SPOOK a little but keep steady.

WILL
Ho-o-oly crap! This is bonkers!

The sleigh has a bench where Santa sits and an open trunk area, behind his high seat back.

Will points the camera down, looking for Teddy. Can't find him and searches around frantically.

TEDDY (O.S.)
Psst!

He whips around and Teddy is climbing up the telephone pole.

WILL (O.S.)
Hey, I'm filming this! You're gonna spook the reindeer!

TEDDY
Careful with that camera. If anything happens to that lens...

WILL
You're gonna break your neck!

TEDDY
It's not my neck I'd be worried about if I were you.

Teddy climbs around the pole and gets ready to jump.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Put the camera down and help me.

That's when they hear Santa push his bag out of the chimney. Teddy hides behind the telephone pole. Almost loses his grip. Will hits the floor.

Will lies on the floor of the sleigh. HOLDS THE CAMERA UP and watches as Santa looks over at the sleigh, suspiciously.

After a beat, he goes back to the task at hand and jumps from house to house. The sleigh starts to move. Will whips the camera around to Ted as he makes a split decision and *jumps!*

...And misses!

WILL
Teddy!

OBJECTIVE POV: As Will drops the camera and looks over the side of the sleigh...

Where Ted is hanging on to the runner with one hand.

WILL (CONT'D)
I told you not to jump!

TEDDY
Help me up!

Will climbs over the edge of the sleigh. Reaches down.

WILL
Grab my hand. Quick!

Teddy grabs his hand and loses his hold on the sleigh. Drops and Will uses all his strength to pull him back up until he can get a foothold on the runner.

TEDDY
I got it. I'm good.

WILL
Careful. Slowly.

EXT. BACK OF THE SLEIGH - NIGHT

Will climbs in and helps Teddy into the sleigh. They take a beat to catch their breath, relieved.

WILL
You almost gave me a heart attack.

TEDDY
Almost gave myself one.

They warm their hands and look around. The whole thing is just too surreal.

WILL
Now do you believe in Santa Claus?

Teddy sneers.

TEDDY
Nobody likes a gloater.

SHUNK! Santa comes out of the chimney and they hit the floor. The sleigh starts to move. Teddy is uneasy.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Okay. We got proof that he's real. Now, *let's go*.

WILL
Are you kidding? We need to film as much of this as we can. There's so much I want to know! Like how does he do it all in one night? And how does he know who gets a present and who doesn't? Dad said he has, like, a sixth sense--

That's when Teddy notices something. A THICK BOOK on the floor in the front seat. He reaches and slides it over. Reads the binder. "NICE".

They both react and Teddy opens it up. Thumbs through it.

TEDDY
Mackay... Mackay... Mackay...

He finds the page. Scans down. Finds the last name.

CLOSE ON THE LINE: "MACKAY, WILL. RAZOR RIPSTIK CASTER BOARD (SILVER)". Will fist pumps.

WILL
Yes!

Teddy thumbs down and it moves onto another kid. No Teddy. Teddy reacts. Will feels bad for him when...

WHUNK! Santa jumps back in the front of the sleigh and they freeze. Try to tuck themselves under the seat as much as possible to hide. Teddy takes the camera and turns it on.

<u>CAMERA POV</u>: As Teddy films Santa Claus's feet only a few inches away. Santa's taking care of some business up front. Starts feeling around the floor for something.

Will points to the book and Teddy slowly slides it up until Santa finds it. Will looks into the camera, geeking out.

WILL (CONT'D)
(mouthing)
Oh my God!

Teddy points the camera up and sees the back of Santa's head.

Santa throws his giant sack in the back seat over the lens. CLICKS HIS TONGUE and the reindeers take off...

WOOOOOOSHHHHHHH!!!!

EXT. SKY ABOVE MASSACHUSETTS - NIGHT

Into the sky. They move FAST.

The CLOUD COVER seems to fly down towards them and within seconds they're above the clouds.

WIND BLASTS the camera's mic. Will's hair whips around like crazy. He wedges his body against the seat to prevent himself from flying out of the sleigh.

When suddenly, the sleigh makes a hard left. And Teddy can film THE WHOLE TOWN below them from twenty thousand feet. The camera's on its side.

TEDDY
Look. There's the school! I can see all the way to the ocean.

SANTA
Ho-ho-ho...

Santa rights the sled again... And within seconds...

The air around them starts to calm.

Teddy reaches up into the sky and literally *touches* a small, WHITE FLUFFY CLOUD.

TEDDY
No way...

Teddy gets an incredibly close shot of Will's WHITE KNUCKLES. He's freezing. Jaw locked from chattering.

OBJECTIVE POV: Teddy puts the camera down and crawls up next to Will. Tries to warm his arms.

WILL
Ffffreezzzzing...

TEDDY
Shh... Just hang in there, kid.

Teddy looks around as the occasional cloud wisps by. Looks at Will's ears... Which are beet red.

WILL
I c-c-c-can't...

TEDDY
He's gotta go back down soon.

Teddy looks for something to help warm Will. Grabs Santa's sack. Peeks in and all he can see is... AN ENDLESS AMOUNT OF PRESENTS, absolutely impossible for them to fit.

He snaps it closed, freaked out. Turns around to Will... Who's climbing up the seat.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Don't...

Santa is focused on driving. Will rises up behind him, freezing from the high altitude.

WILL
S-S-S-Santa?

He taps Santa on the shoulder and...

STARTLES the old man. Santa instinctively jerks back the reins causing the front reindeer to buck.

SANTA
Whoa!!!

Will tumbles over Teddy and WHACKS the back of the sled. Santa pulls down the reins to try to regain control and SNAP!

The leather strap breaks, CRACKING one of the reindeer on the hindquarters and...

SHONG! Sends the sleigh UP and BACK into a tailspin.

Will tumbles backwards over Teddy as they get tossed around in the back. Santa tries to regain control but things devolve quickly...

BAHROOOOOOOMM!!!!!!

A 737 rushes right past them from below. SHUNG!!! The force sends them spinning in an unnatural jag. The whole thing feels very intense and very real.

CRACK!

The wooden tugs connected to the reindeer start to splinter.

WHONG!

The air around them STROBES and the cloud cover changes instantly. Like they just jumped through a portal. The sled flips upside down and...

WHONG!

It STROBES again. The ground beneath them changes. They go from the middle of nowhere, to above a MAJOR CITY.

The sleigh careens to the side and the rushing wind pulls Santa's sack out of the sled and into the sky.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Hold on!

Santa hunkers down and prepares as...

CRACK-ACK! The two front left reindeer BREAK OFF from the team and fly away.

Now the remaining reindeer can't keep the sled afloat and they start to sink, fast! Like the feeling you get as the roller coaster crests the big dip and barrels downwards.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Easy... Easy...

They approach a THICKET OF TREES. Santa tries to steer them away, but he's pretty much helpless at this point.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Brace yourselves!

SSSHHHHHH-CHA! The sled knives into the tree tops. Gets KNOCKED around haphazardly...

Will grabs Teddy's arm. Squeezes until...

WHACK!

The sled hits the ground and slides sideways. Breaks off from the reindeer and tumbles into a ditch...

EXT. DITCH - NIGHT

We get a 'post accident' beat of calm.

The reindeer run off a few yards and then stop, tangled up in each other. They BLEAT, frightened.

Will's eyes are squeezed closed. He finally feels safe enough to open them. Inspects himself. He's in one piece.

Looks around for Teddy. He climbs up the side of the sleigh and sees his brother sitting up in the snow. Dazed and confused but okay.

WILL
What just happened?

TEDDY
I'll let you know when I start breathing.

CAMERA POV: Teddy dutifully picks up the camera and films.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Camera still works...

He SCANS THE SITE-- seeing where they impacted the ground

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Where are--

SANTA appears in the frame, sitting up in the sleigh.

SANTA
Are you boys alright?

The brothers SCREAM, startled.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Whoa... It's okay. It's only me.

The old man's a little shaken, just now getting his bearings. Teddy and Will look at each other, before we RESUME:

CAMERA POV: ZOOMING in on St. Nick himself.

TEDDY
And just so we're clear, 'only me' is...?

SANTA
I'm Santa Claus, of course.

Will looks back at the camera, geeking out. *Oh my God!*

WILL
I'm so sorry, Santa. We didn't mean-

SANTA
To be boys?

Will smiles.

WILL
Do you mind if I...

Santa nods. Will reaches out and Santa lets him touch his sleeve. In awe.

TEDDY
I don't understand. So, this. You. The whole thing... This is real?

WILL
This is the coolest thing in the history of, like, ever!

Santa addresses the camera.

SANTA
I have to say this is definitely a first for me too.

Santa surveys the wreck as he tries to catch his breath.

SANTA (CONT'D)
And I'm afraid this isn't good. Not good at all...

He suddenly remembers something. Looks around the sled.

SANTA (CONT'D)
My sack... Did you see what happened to my sack?

WILL
It blew off. A few minutes before we crashed.

SANTA
(worried)
Oh, dear. Not good at all...

Santa tries to walk --

SANTA (CONT'D)
Ho, ho --

-- and winces in pain.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Oh!

WILL
Santa! What's wrong?

Will helps steady him and Teddy runs over to help.

SANTA
It's alright. Just my knee.

WILL
We'll go get help.

SANTA
No! No one else can know.

He pauses, thinking, then looks at Will and Teddy.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Can I trust you boys to do something for me?

WILL
Anything Santa.

SANTA
I need you to go round up Comet and Donner. I think they broke off over Lakeshore. That way.

WILL
What's Lakeshore?

Teddy turns the camera to where Santa's pointing. Towards a CLUSTER OF LIGHTS in the distance. He ZOOMS IN and ADJUSTS FOCUS on a bright object...

THE SEARS TOWER

twinkling majestically a few miles away. They just traveled over a thousand miles in a handful minutes.

He slowly SCANS the CHICAGO SKYLINE. They're in a desolate, industrial part of town.

WILL (CONT'D)
Epic!

SANTA
I can't fly with six. And I need my bag of toys.

He reaches into a drawer in the front of the sled. Extra pairs of gloves. Some food... And an ORNAMENT. Red with green swirls. He takes it out and pushes a button.

SANTA (CONT'D)
This will help you find it. The closer you get, the faster it will chime.

He gives the ornament to Will. Practically glows in his hand.

WILL
But what about your leg? And the sled?

SANTA
I'll take care of things here. Round up the reindeer. And once you find the sack, open it up and yell down into it. The elves will hear you and help out.

TEDDY
I don't understand.

WILL
Duh! It's a portal to the North Pole! Of course! That's how he fits all the presents in there!

Santa nods, impressed. Pulls them close. Gets serious.

SANTA
If I'm not up and running in the next hour, half the continent's not getting presents and that can never happen.

TEDDY
Why not?

SANTA
All around the globe, young girls and boys are waiting for Santa, and if I don't come, why... You don't want to know what happened the last time I couldn't make my rounds.

WILL
What happened?

SANTA
Have you read about the Dark Ages or the plague in school?

WILL
Sure, but... Wait, that happened cause you missed Christmas?

SANTA
Christmas spirit is more powerful than you could ever imagine. People need Christmas to remind themselves of how good they can be and without it...

Santa holds back. Addresses the camera, ominous.

SANTA (CONT'D)
It must endure.

Teddy is still trying to absorb everything.

TEDDY
This is stupid. We're never gonna find all that stuff. Could be anywhere.

SANTA
You'd be amazed at what you can accomplish in one night, Teddy.

Teddy reacts, amazed.

TEDDY
How'd you know my name?

SANTA
It's never too late to get off the naughty list.

Santa winks and Teddy is speechless. Will puffs his chest out with resolve.

WILL
We won't let you down!

Santa looks him in the eye. Encouraging.

SANTA
I know you won't, Will. Now, go!

The boys fill with resolve and head out.

As soon as they're gone, Santa crumbles into his seat. Looks down his leg and we can see that a blood stain is starting to form on his pants. He's in worse shape than he led on.

EXT. BACK ROAD - NIGHT

OBJECTIVE POV: Will and Teddy walk down the road in a daze.

WILL
I can't believe this...

Teddy tries to put a plan together. Will starts crying.

TEDDY
What are you blubbering about?

WILL
We ruined Christmas!

TEDDY
If you had just stayed on the ground like I told you to--

WILL
Fine. *I* ruined Christmas! Happy? And we just left Santa in a ditch.

TEDDY
We'll fix it.

WILL
Those reindeer can be anywhere! And we don't know anything about Chicago.

TEDDY
Just shut the hell up for a second.

WILL
I'm never gonna live this down...

They're approaching the MAIN DRAG of a suburban town.

WILL (CONT'D)
We can call a cab!

TEDDY
And pay for it with what money?

Will checks his pockets. Comes up empty. Teddy notices a CHINESE RESTAURANT down the street. A VALET parking cars.

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The brothers walk up to the entrance of the restaurant and Teddy quickly sizes up the KEY BOX.

WILL
Teddy...

TEDDY
Just shut up, okay?

WILL
What are you doing?

The VALET runs back and Teddy pretends like he's just walking out of the restaurant.

TEDDY
We're waiting for our parents.

Someone drops off their CAR and the Valet goes to park it. Teddy seizes the moment, takes out his POCKET KNIFE, and starts picking the lock on the key box.

WILL
Didn't Dad give you that when you were in the *Boy Scouts?*

Teddy ignores him. Opens the box and grabs a set of keys. Will is overwhelmed. Has no choice but to follow his brother.

EXT. BACK PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Teddy heads for the back parking lot.

WILL
Teddy, you don't know anything about driving a car!

Once the valet disappears, Teddy presses the key button and one of the cars UNLOCKS. *OO-OOH!*

WILL (CONT'D)
You look like you've done this before.

TEDDY
Yeah, well, there's a lot you don't know about me. Get in.

INT. LEXUS - NIGHT

Teddy climbs into the car and adjusts the seat. Will looks at his brother in shock. Teddy glances up, guilty.

TEDDY
Stop gawking at me like that.
(guiltier)
I may have borrowed a car or two and taken it out for a joyride.

WILL
You are never getting off the naughty list.

Teddy looks at him and smiles slyly.

TEDDY
Unless I save Christmas.

GRN-RN-RN! Starts the car. Will is both repulsed and amazed by his brother.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC is on the radio. Teddy pulls out a cell phone. Tosses it to Will.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Open the police scanner app. If two reindeer are running through downtown Chicago, we're gonna hear about it.

He hits the gas and they PEEL OUT.

WILL
We need to call mom... She'll be home in an hour.

TEDDY
We stuffed the beds. That should buy us enough time til morning.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - NIGHT

Teddy drives into a more populated area of the city.

WILL
Stay on this road until we see signs for, um, Lakeshore Drive.

INT. LEXUS - CONTINUOUS

Will switches over to the POLICE SCANNER. We hear SQUEAKS and SQUAWKS and random LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNICATION.

Will turns the camera on...

CAMERA POV: SCANS the city, looking for the reindeer. Turns the camera on Teddy.

TEDDY
Stop filming me. This is a crime, dummy.

WILL
When did you learn to drive?

TEDDY
Dad. Used to take me to the Walmart parking lot...
(reflecting)
And still I almost hit a light pole.
(laughing)
Dad was a real patient guy.

WILL
Something tells me there wasn't anything in those lessons about stealing a car from the valet.

TEDDY
He would lick my hide if he caught me doing this. You know that.
(beat)
Jacob and Paul. They showed me how to do it.

WILL
Why do you hang out with those guys, anyway? You used to be the coolest guy I knew. Now you're... I don't know what you are.

TEDDY
(considers the question)
Those guys understand me. They know what I'm goin' through.

WILL
I know what you're goin' through...

Teddy reacts.

TEDDY
Yeah, but you're my brother. Not my friend.

OBJECTIVE POV: Will shuts the camera off. Teddy sees that he hurt his brother's feelings. Didn't mean to. Is about to say something when...

POLICE SCANNER (O.S.)
(over the phone)
All units. We have a reported grand theft auto. A twenty ten white Lexus, license plate six bee I vee seven two four.

The brothers stare at each other horrified.

WILL
Crap! We should ditch the car.

TEDDY
We're fine. Don't worry about it.

WILL
I told you this was a bad idea!

TEDDY
You're such a baby. We just need to get downtown and then--

POLICE SCANNER (O.S.)
(over the phone)
Any available car in sector seven. We have multiple sightings of two deer running down Michigan Avenue.

The brothers stare at each other. Light up.

POLICE SCANNER (CONT'D)
This is not a joke. Two large deer heading southbound on Michigan Ave, four hundred block.

Will flips over to the GPS and searches the map.

WILL
That's not far from here! Take this exit!

TEDDY
Hold on.

Teddy lurches right and CUTS OFF TWO CARS to make the exit.

EXT. MICHIGAN AVENUE - NIGHT

SILENT NIGHT plays on the radio.

It's late and the city is mostly quiet. The boys drive slowly down the street, looking everywhere. Will scans the streets with night vision. Comes up short.

WILL
(nervous)
We should look for them on foot.

TEDDY
Don't be such a pussy.

CAMERA POV: Will points the camera down the side streets as they drive past.

WILL
Wait a second...

He ZOOMS DOWN towards the end of the block and sees a QUICK FLASH OF AN ANIMAL run in the opposite direction.

WILL (CONT'D)
I think I saw 'em. Down that street. Turn around! Turn around.

TEDDY
Hold on. Put the camera down.

WILL
Why?

TEDDY
Put the camera down!

Will whips the camera around and sees a POLICE CAR heading towards them on the other side of the street.

The OFFICER in the driver's seat eyes them, suspicious, and Will hides the camera.

INT. LEXUS - NIGHT

OBJECTIVE POV: Teddy is sweating bullets.

WILL
Do you think they know it's stolen?

TEDDY
Just be cool.

He stares in the rearview.

WILL
We should turn!

TEDDY
Just chill, alright?

IN THE REARVIEW, the cops make a U-turn.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Crap!

WILL
What do we do, Teddy?

TEDDY
Crap!

WILL
How are we gonna explain this to Ma?

TEDDY
I don't know! Just let me think for a second.

Teddy turns left and heads down the side street. Picks up speed and glances in the rearview. The cops follow.

WILL
We're not gonna be able to save Christmas from jail.

TEDDY
If we get caught, we'll just show them the tape.

WILL
By the time they come around, if they even believe us, it'll be too late.

Teddy socks Will in the arm.

TEDDY
Stop acting like such a frickin' baby and grow a pair, will ya?

WILL
You know what? I'm done listening to you.

As Teddy stops at a light, Will jumps out and takes off.

TEDDY
William Christopher Mackay! You get back here!

But Will runs off into the night. And the cops turn on their LIGHTS. Teddy freaks out. Light turns green.

COP
(over the PA)
Pull over.

TEDDY
Shh...

Teddy takes a deep breath. Hits the gas and PEELS OUT.

EXT. CHICAGO RESIDENTIAL CITY STREET - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: Will points the camera everywhere, trying to locate the reindeer. We hear his HEAVY BREATH.

WOO-WOO-WOO! He ducks behind a car as Teddy comes flying past with the squad car tailing him.

WILL (O.S.)
Teddy!

Will picks up the pace. When suddenly, he hears a JINGLING. Stops. Points the camera around.

More JINGLING.

But the reindeer are nowhere to be found.

WILL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What the...

That's when he notices the sound is coming from above. POINTS THE CAMERA UP where he sees the two reindeer on top of the brownstone roof.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Will CLICKS his tongue like Santa did earlier and the reindeer lift their heads. He tries it again.

He crosses the street to get a better look.

WILL
(like talking to a dog)
Come! Down! Heel!
(thinking)
Um... On Comet! On Donner?

CLICKS again and the reindeer run off in the opposite direction and disappear from sight.

WILL (CONT'D)
Great.

Will sprints around the corner, trying to keep up.

INT. LEXUS - DAY

OBJECTIVE POV: Over *Silent Night*, Teddy takes the cops on a car chase through Chi-town. Weaves through traffic on Lakeshore Drive.

Starts to lose control and POPS A TIRE on the curb.

THUDA-THUDA-THUDA! WHACKS the steering wheel.

TEDDY
Christ...

Teddy slows down the car and pulls over.

EXT. CHICAGO RESIDENTIAL CITY STREET - NIGHT

Will runs around to the next block and sees the two reindeer on the other side of the roof. They BLEAT nervously.

WILL
Shh... It's okay! I'm with Santa. You can trust me. I--

That's when he gets an idea. Reaches into his pocket and pulls out a handful of CANDY CANES. Holds them out and CLICKS his tongue. No interest.

He unwraps them and crushes them up [just like we saw his father do in the opening montage]. Puts the pile of peppermint crumbs on the ground.

WILL (CONT'D)
There you go. Good reindeer. Nice yummy peppermint.

He walks down the block, casually, and ducks into a doorway. Waits for a moment and hears the JINGLING again.

CAMERA POV: Sticks the camera out around the corner and watches through the viewfinder as the reindeer coast down and approach the candy. He's amazed that it actually worked.

WILL (CONT'D)
Dad was right!

He steps out and calmly approaches the animals. Comet is wild and spooks easily. Donner is gentle and friendlier.

WILL (CONT'D)
Shhhh... It's okay. I'm a good guy. I won't hurt ya.

The reindeer don't know what to make of him but allow him to get close. They're tangled together with the broken rein.

WILL (CONT'D)
That's it. That's it...

They spook easily. Will stops. Waits for his moment... And grabs Comet's bridle. Reacts, ecstatic.

WILL (CONT'D)
Sweet!

WHUNK! Spooked, the reindeer take off down the street, dragging Will behind them.

EXT. LAKESHORE DRIVE TURNOFF - NIGHT

POLICE CAR CAMERA POV: Teddy sits on the curb as he's being interrogated by the COPS. He seems to have lost the usual tough guy act.

TEDDY
I told you. We flew here in Santa Claus's sleigh.

COP
From Massachusetts?

TEDDY
Yeah. And he crash landed outside of town. We just want to give him his reindeer back and get home before our mom finds out.

The cops exchange a glance.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Look, I don't expect you to believe me, but it's the truth. Once we find my brother I can--

And that's when they hear a JINGLE in the distance. And YELLING. The cops look down the empty street.

OBJECTIVE POV: As the reindeer come running around the corner, Will holding on. Sneakers dragging on the ground.

WILL
Stoooooppp!

The cops are totally caught off guard. Not sure what to do. And Teddy seizes the opportunity. Jumps up and runs.

TEDDY
Hold on! Will!

The cops give chase.

WILL
Teddy! Help! I can't get on!

TEDDY
Step on my hand!

Teddy boosts Will up onto the reindeer as it runs. Runs up to the other and pulls himself across his back.

WILL
They're tangled!

TEDDY
I'll get it.

The FAT CHICAGO COP struggles to keep up.

COP
(walkie)
I got two kids, potential car thieves, riding on the backs of--
(stopping himself)
Well, I don't really understand what I'm looking at, to tell you the truth! I just need backup!

Teddy struggles to undo the knot when suddenly, it gives way. The reindeer untangle from each other. And feet from the shoreline and certain doom...

They both TAKE OFF INTO THE SKY -- SOARING INTO THE CLOUDS -- MUSIC SWELLING!

The cops run up to the lake, stopping short and staring out, equally amazed and baffled.

EXT. SKY ABOVE CHICAGO - NIGHT

Will and Teddy CHEER as they soar above Lake Michigan, wind whipping through their hair!

TEDDY
Wooo-hooo!!!!

WILL
Holy crap!

It's a magic moment.

TEDDY
I'm on Donner. What about you?

Will looks at his reindeer's gold plate. "COMET".

WILL
Comet. Epic!

But Comet starts BUCKING and jagging, almost tossing Will off his back.

WILL (CONT'D)
Easy boy! Whoa!

Will struggles to hold on. Comet does not like having someone on his back.

ON DONNER'S BACK

Teddy is worried about his brother.

TEDDY
Get him to calm down!

WILL
I can't!

Will clings for dear life. Almost thrown from his reindeer.

Teddy looks at Donner and tries to figure out why he's so under control. Then hears the JINGLE.

TEDDY
The bells!

Two straps of JINGLE BELLS are draped from Donner's headgear, keeping him CALM. Teddy reaches forward and unhooks one. Pulls over closer to his brother...

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Will! Catch this.

WILL
If I let go, I'll fall.

TEDDY
You'll fall if you don't. Now, on three. One, two...

Teddy gets as close to Comet as possible and tosses the STRAP OF BELLS to his brother. Will catches them...

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Now shake them!

Will starts shaking them, and sure enough Comet starts to calm down and falls in line with Donner. The boys breath a sigh of relief...

EXT. ABOVE THE CITY - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: They soar around the city. Past buildings where HALF-DRESSED PEOPLE do double takes in apartment windows.

Past the JOHN HANCOCK BUILDING, SEARS TOWER, CHICAGO RIVER...

TEDDY
Cool city. Never been here before.

WILL
You've never been anywhere before.

Teddy points up ahead at the city's FOOTBALL STADIUM.

TEDDY
Soldier Field! Let's go see.

They coast over to take a look and Teddy soars up and over the bleachers.

EXT. SOLDIER FIELD - NIGHT

They circle the dark football field.

TEDDY
Are you filming this?

Teddy gets a mischievous grin and swoops down over the field.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Bears suck! Go Pats!

Teddy poses and soars through the goal posts.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX - NIGHT

An industrial complex on the edge of town.

INT. SECURITY DESK - NIGHT

A LAZY SECURITY GUARD watches CHARLIE BROWN'S CHRISTMAS on television. A panel of monitors in front of him of a large, industrial complex. A large XMAS TREE behind him.

A STERN GUARD wanders in and glances at the monitors.

STERN GUARD
What's this over here?

The guard spins around in his seat and sees what he's looking at... SANTA ON HIS SLEIGH, just outside the fence.

LAZY GUARD
It's outside the complex.

STERN GUARD
You got something better to do?

The lazy guard GROANS and gets out of his chair.

EXT. PERIMETER OF THE COMPLEX - NIGHT

The lazy guard drives his golf cart out to the fence surrounding a large industrial complex. Scans the woods with his flashlight and sees the sleigh.

LAZY GUARD
Hello?

Suddenly, Santa's head pops out from the other side. He's not wearing his stocking cap. Seems a little out of sorts.

LAZY GUARD (CONT'D)
Sir? You're on private property.
I'm gonna have to ask you to leave.

SANTA
Just waiting for help to arrive and
I'll be on my way.

The guard unlocks a door in the fence and approaches the sleigh. Santa has wrapped his leg in a splint and is trying to repair the sleigh. The guard reacts, bewildered.

LAZY GUARD
Aren't you a little far from the
mall this time of night?

SANTA
I'm just trying to get it back in
flying condition.

LAZY GUARD
(into his walkie)
Looks like we got a live one.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

The stern guard watches Santa and the guard on the monitor.

INT. COMPLEX PERIMETER - NIGHT

The guard approaches Santa cautiously. This is the most action he's probably ever seen at this job.

SANTA
You wouldn't happen to have something sweet on you?

Santa has to hold the sleigh to keep upright. He seems weak.

LAZY GUARD
How about that? A drunk Santa on Christmas.

SANTA
It's my blood sugar. Look, James. Would you lift this side of the sleigh while I--

The guard backs away. Santa is in bad shape.

LAZY GUARD
How... How'd you know my name?

SANTA
Oh, well, it's just your...

Santa breaks into a terrible COUGH. Lurches towards him.

LAZY GUARD
Stay back! I'm warning you.

SANTA
But it's just your...

Santa stumbles into him and...

WHUMP! Drops to the ground, the guard barely able to hold him up. A little spooked himself.

LAZY GUARD
Great...
(into his walkie)
Come out here and help me get this guy in the cart.

The guard looks down at his chest and sees what Santa was pointing at. His name tag that clearly says JAMES.

EXT. OVER CHICAGO - NIGHT

Will catches up with Teddy, flying over the city.

WILL
(beat)
So, what now?

TEDDY
I thought you weren't listening to me anymore.

WILL
I'm sorry.

Teddy thinks about it. Lightens.

TEDDY
Yeah, well... You saved my ass back there. So, we're even.

Will smiles to himself.

PING!

Will reaches into his pocket and pulls out the ornament. It strobes very slowly and CHIMES.

WILL
The ornament chimed! Santa said this would help us find the bag of toys! Like a homing device...

PING! PING!

TEDDY
Does that mean we're close?

WILL
I guess...

PING! PING! PING!

WILL (CONT'D)
We're getting warmer...

TEDDY
Let's take 'em down a little. Watch out for phone wires.

They coast downwards and the PACE OF THE CHIMES PICKS UP.

WILL
It's around here somewhere.

Will gets out the camera and SCANS THE GROUND.

EXT. ABOVE THE STREETS - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: They fly down the street and the PACE OF THE CHIMES SLOWS UP.

WILL
Turn back. We passed it!

They double back. The CHIMES QUICKEN and SLOW AGAIN.

TEDDY
You'd think the signal would be stronger if we were close.

WILL
Teddy...

Will ZOOMS IN ON SOMETHING and steadies the camera on...

THE RED SACK

Draped over the cross on the roof of an ornate church. People are FILING IN the front doors below.

TEDDY
Midnight Mass...

WILL
It's too crowded to fly down there.

TEDDY
Let's find a safe place to tie these guys up and check it out.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Will films as they walk up to the BEAUTIFUL CATHEDRAL. Will turns around and ZOOMS IN on the two reindeer tied up on the roof of a building. Right below a Christmas-themed Billboard.

He PANS OVER to Teddy as he takes a deep breath, uneasy. Teddy clearly has issues about going to church.

OBJECTIVE POV: Will puts the camera down. Comforts Teddy.

WILL
You okay?

TEDDY
Yeah. Just haven't been in a church since before...

WILL
I can go in alone if you want.

Teddy puts on a tough face.

TEDDY
No. It's fine.

Teddy nervously fidgets his pocket knife. They walk up.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The church is packed for a Midnight Mass service already in progress. The boys gawk at the huge stained glass windows.

An USHER approaches them.

USHER
(whispers)
I have some seats up here.

Will looks at Teddy. Teddy nods. It's okay. They make their way up to a middle pew. End of the aisle.

They take their seats and scan the church. Will looks behind them and notices something. Taps Teddy on the shoulder.

WILL
(whispers)
Catwalk.

There's a catwalk that leads out to a small window on the roof. The OLD WOMAN next to them glares at Will, scolding.

OLD WOMAN
Sh!

They get back to pretending to pray. The service is deeply beautiful and moving. The CHOIR fills the room with warmth and love, then a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN steps up and starts to sing

AVE MARIA

It's an emotionally powerful moment. A few people have a tear in their eyes. And Teddy is clearly freaking out, fidgeting in his seat. The whole scene is overwhelming.

TEDDY
I need to use the bathroom.

He gets up and rushes out of the room. Will thinks for a moment and follows him in.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Will looks in the bathroom.

WILL
Teddy?

Teddy is in the stall.

TEDDY
I'm fine. Just give me a second.

WILL
(worried)
Something's wrong. I know it.

TEDDY
Get the hell out of here before I knock your block off!

Will leans against the stall.

WILL
I'm not going anywhere.

INT. BATHROOM STALL - CONTINUOUS

Teddy is sitting on the toilet, fidgeting with his pocket knife. He rubs a hand across the inscription. "A MACKAY ALWAYS SEES IT THROUGH."

WILL (O.S.)
Everybody understands, you know...

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

WILL
Nobody blames you for doing what you did.

Teddy kicks the door open. Eyes red.

TEDDY
I didn't go to my own father's funeral! What kind of rotten person am I?

WILL
You just have to forgive yourself and move on.

TEDDY
Yeah, right...
(whispering)
I said there wasn't any such thing as God. How could there be? To take someone like Dad from us...
(thinking)
But if there's a Santa Claus, then-

Will thinks about this. He didn't even consider it. Teddy shamefully wipes a tear away.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
I just feel like everything good in my life gets taken away. First Dad, now Grace...

WILL
But I thought you guys were still--

TEDDY
I was kidding myself. I thought I could make it work but... She moved a thousand miles away. It just wasn't meant to be...

Will really sees his brother for the first time in a while.

WILL
I think it's like Ma said. We just need to believe in each other.

Teddy reacts. Nods.

WILL (CONT'D)
Good. Let's hug it out.

TEDDY
In your dreams.

Teddy reaches into his backpack. Pulls out a rope.

WILL
What's that for?

TEDDY
You.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

With the service in progress, the two boys sneak up a small stairwell to the catwalk. The rope tied around Will's waist.

Will gets to the LITTLE WINDOW and unlatches it. Peers out over the steep roof, where the sack is caught on a cross.

WILL
(whispering)
I don't know about this...

TEDDY
Don't worry. I got you.

EXT. CHURCH ROOF - NIGHT

Will steps out onto the roof and Teddy holds on tight. Starts to lower him down with the rope.

TEDDY
Easy... Just move slowly.

Will inches down.

WILL
It's further over than it looks.

TEDDY
You can do it. Just pretend you're Spiderman. Go that way and swing.

Will crawls in the opposite direction.

WILL
(nervous, to himself)
Spiderman... Spiderman... Does whatever a spider can...

Will tries to swing over, but doesn't get too far.

TEDDY
Again!

Will tries again. This time a little more successful.

Swings back and runs across the roof as he swings towards the cross. And at just the right time, Teddy let's some lead out.

Will slips and slides down the roof, catching a foothold against the cross before he slips off. THUD!

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

One of the ALTAR BOYS looks up and notices Teddy leaning out the window. Nudges another ALTAR BOY and points him out. The Altar Boy walks over and tells the usher.

EXT. CHURCH ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Will finds his footing and reaches up towards the bag. His fingers tickle the fabric. He can tug it a little, but it's firmly hooked on the top of the cross.

TEDDY
You gotta climb up.

Will takes a deep breath. Grabs the cross and pulls himself up. He barely has a grip. Looking over the edge of the church just makes him dizzy. He fills with resolve and reaches up. Pulls the bag off the cross and climbs down.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Nice work, kid!

INT. CATWALK, CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Teddy looks behind him and sees the usher looking up at them. The usher heads into the stairwell.

TEDDY
Now walk back up and I'll pull you.

Will climbs back up as Teddy pulls him with the rope. He keeps looking behind him as the Usher appears on the catwalk. Waves him over, angrily. Teddy ignores him.

INT. CHURCH ROOF - CONTINUOUS

TEDDY
Keep walking... You're too heavy to pull as dead weight.

WILL
My legs are tired.

TEDDY
You gotta do this! Santa's counting on you!

And this is all he needed to hear. As the usher approaches Teddy, Will climbs up to the window.

INT. CATWALK, CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Pulls himself inside and the two stumble onto the catwalk. The usher looks down at them angrily. Busted.

USHER
What do you think you're doing?

TEDDY
Sorry! My brother thought he saw Santa Claus!

WILL
It was just a cat. Guess there's no such thing!

They brush past the usher and run down the stairs. He reacts confused, looks out the window and shuts it closed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Claire gets home. Walks into the living room and sees the open closet. The kitchen door open.

She looks out into the night and closes the door, concerned.

INT. WILL AND TEDDY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Claire cracks the door to the boys' room, quietly. Sees the two mounds sleeping under the covers. Smiles, relieved. Closes the door and heads into her bedroom.

EXT. CHICAGO RESIDENTIAL CITY STREET - NIGHT

The boys walk down the street with the sack.

TEDDY
Now we just get the reindeer and go back to Santa.

WILL
Santa said to call the elves. Said they can help us.

Will opens up the bag. Looks down at the mountain of presents that disappears into the darkness.

WILL (CONT'D)
Hello? Elves?

Teddy shakes his head, embarrassed.

TEDDY
You look so stupid doing that. Come on. Let's go somewhere nobody can see us.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

They take the sack into a sketchy park on the South Side.

WILL
Hello! Is anybody in there?

TEDDY
Let's just bring it back to Santa.

Will peers inside.

WILL
I think there's just enough room for me to crawl in.

TEDDY
No chance. I think you've done more than your fair share for one night.

WILL
Teddy. This is all our fault. We gotta at least try. Now hold this.

He hands the lip of the sack to Teddy.

WILL (CONT'D)
I'll just be a second.

TEDDY
Will. Don't do this. I got a bad feeling.

WILL
It'll be fine.

Will climbs in. Disappears down into it like magic.

TEDDY
Will!

WILL (O.S.)
I'm okay! It's alright!

INT. SACK - NIGHT

Will crawls, headfirst down the huge mound of toys.

WILL
I think it widens out!

He crawls down the tight tunnel until it starts to widen out.

WILL (CONT'D)
Hello? Anybody there?

TEDDY (O.S.)
Will!

WILL
It's like a huge room down here!

He crawls forward, until he loses his footing and...

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

WHUMP! Tumbles down into a dark space. Scares himself a little bit and looks back up towards the high ceiling.

WILL
Teddy?

No answer.

He can't even see his hand in front of his face. He gets an idea, digs around the bag and pulls out the video camera.

CAMERA POV: Will turns on the night vision and realizes that he's sitting on A GIANT PILE OF PRESENTS in a huge space.

WILL (CONT'D)
Hello?

He crawls down the pile and a present gives way, causing him tumble down with an AVALANCHE OF GIFTS.

He reacts and realizes his leg is stuck in a box.

OVER-FRIENDLY VOICE (O.S.)
I love you!

Will pulls his foot out of the present and sees a STUFFED ANIMAL inside. He accidentally hit the 'talk' button.

Tosses it away and crawls further down the pile until he sees some movement across the room.

There's an opening in the wall and as he approaches it, we see that it's A CONVEYER BELT with presents tumbling out.

The floor of the room is spring-loaded to push the presents up the funnel into the bag.

WILL
Wicked!

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

OBJECTIVE POV: Teddy waits nervously for his brother. Some SHADY GUYS walk down the sidewalk on the other side of the park. Ted ducks into the shadows and looks in the sack.

TEDDY
Will? Will?

He's getting really worried. Can't decide what to do.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Goddammit! Will, get out of there!

And that's when he's approached from behind by a group of THUGS. Not nice guys. Teddy knows he's in trouble.

THUG #1
What you doin', boy? Who you talkin' to?

He looks for somewhere to run.

TEDDY
Nothing. Nobody.

THUG #1
That's not what it sounded like.

The thug reaches for the bag and Teddy clutches it, protectively. They all glance at each other.

TEDDY
Look, guys. Respect. I didn't realize this was the wrong place to be. If it's okay with you, I'll just be on my way.

Teddy tries to walk past them, but they shove him back.

THUG #1
Nobody said it was okay.
(to the other guys)
Did you hear someone say it's okay?

TEDDY
C'mon guys. It's Christmas.

They all LAUGH.

THUG #1
Ohhh!! It's Christmas! Of course. The kid's asking for a Christmas pass.

They LAUGH and Teddy tries to smile, shitting his pants. One of the thugs feels a little sorry for him.

THUG #2
C'mon. Why are we bothering with this fool?

THUG #1
Fine. You're right. We'll let him go.
(off Ted's reaction)
Just hand over the bag and hustle your ass back home to your mama.

Teddy builds all his nerve and clenches the bag tighter.

TEDDY
I'm sorry, but I can't do that.

They all mock his bravado.

THUGS
Oooooh... Tough guy over here! You think you're a tough guy?

One guy puts a hand on his shoulder and he shrugs it off.

TEDDY
No.

The head thug gets real close in his face.

THUG #1
I want you to think really hard about this. What could possibly be in that bag that would be worth what's about to happen to you?

INT. PRESENT ROOM - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: Will scans the room and sees a ladder leading to a hatch. Climbs it slowly. Turns the wheel and it...

BLASTS OPEN from GALE FORCE WINDS. Will heads outside...

EXT. NORTH POLE - NIGHT

To a stark, arctic landscape. Up in the sky, AURORA BOREALIS lights up the night with a magical wavy rainbow of colors. A giant 'U' of a CRESCENT MOON hangs low in the sky.

WILL
Whoa...

WHUNK!

The hatch slams closed behind him. He tries to lift it but it's stuck.

He points the camera back around and sees what looks like a LARGE DOMED BUILDING a few hundred yards away. A RED LIGHT blinking on a tower on the roof.

On closer inspection, it's a gigantic structure, half buried in snow and architecturally amazing. Like something a team of Finland's greatest architects came up with.

Will heads in that direction when he hears something. Whips the camera around and something is heading towards him.

Can't quite tell what it is through the snow... but it's a large figure. And it's moving fast.

Will starts to back away slowly as he realizes what it is...

A POLAR BEAR. Charging.

The camera shakes and knocks around as Will runs for the other building.

WILL (CONT'D)
Help! Help me!

Will runs for it as the GALLOP of the bear can be heard gaining on him. Will reaches the door, runs inside...

INT. GREAT ROOM, NORTH POLE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

And SLAMS IT SHUT just as the bear BARRELS into it.

WHUNK! The bear CRIES OUT on the other side. He can see its distorted shadow through the thick clear windowed walls.

WILL
Most traumatic Christmas ever...

Will collects himself and stands up. Points the camera around the dark, gigantic room which looks like the inside of an intricate ornament. Series of staircases swirl and twist into various rooms. The entire place is made out of ice.

A huge PINE TREE grows from the center, stretching out above the roof.

WILL (CONT'D)
Whoa...

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

OBJECTIVE POV: The scene in the park has devolved quickly. One of the thugs holds a kicking and screaming Teddy, while the other pries the bag out of his hands.

TEDDY
No!

The thug looks into the bag and is taken aback.

THUG #1
Where'd you get this?

TEDDY
None of your business.

The thug punches him in the gut. Reaches into the bag and pulls out a PRESENT. Shakes it.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Those aren't yours!

THUG #2
How much stuff is in there?

THUG #1
A lot. A lotta lot.

Suddenly, a SQUAD CAR drives down the street across the park, cruising the neighborhood. Teddy tries to yell to them but one of the guys covers his mouth.

THUG #1 (CONT'D)
Take him with us.

THUG #2
Why?

THUG #1
He looks like he may be worth something. You got an ATM card?

TEDDY
No.

THUG #1
We'll see about that...

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: Will walks up a staircase and into an enormous room, the size of two Costcos.

In the center, HUNDREDS OF TINY WORKSTATIONS, big enough for something the size of a guinea pig. Scandinavian design.

And walls of wooden shelves filled with THOUSANDS OF TOYS.

Four enormous rows of STUFFED ANIMALS. Four rows of ACTION FIGURES. SKATEBOARDS. BIKES. ELECTRONICS.

Electronics? Will double takes. Heads down the aisle.

OBJECTIVE POV: Will scans the aisle with his camera until he sees what he's looking for. BOXES OF LAPTOP COMPUTERS.

He looks around to see if anyone's watching him...

And grabs a LAPTOP off the shelf. Sticks it in his backpack. Looks around again and continues his search.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

We see the light from his camera illuminate through the glass window on a door. Will peers inside and opens it.

Enters the room and looks around A BEAUTIFUL, GRAND LIBRARY.

Several desk stations with TELEVISIONS. Thousands of tapes stacked haphazardly around each table and piled up alongside.

Will sorts through the tapes. They all have names on them. Will grabs a tape randomly and pops it in one of a half dozen types of playback machines.

A cheerful LITTLE GIRL pops on the screen. In her room.

LITTLE GIRL
Dear Santa. I would like a Sugar Blossom tea party set with Lemon Limony and Apple Pucker figurines--

Will lets it play and looks at the tall, card catalog-type filing cabinets. He opens a drawer and sees it's filled with

LETTERS TO SANTA

Kids asking for all sorts of things. He closes it.

Each row is marked by year. He heads down one or two years back. Walks by the alphabetical shelves until he hits 'M'. Finds the 'MAB-MAG' drawer and opens it up. Thumbs through the letters to Santa until he finds what he's looking for...

"DEAR SANTA. I'D LIKE A BLUE TOM BRADY JERSEY AND A---
Scrolls down to SINCERELY, TEDDY MACCKAY."

WILL
Ha! I knew it.

That's when it hits him... He runs past the aisles all the way down to the eighties. Stops at '84. Wonders.

Searches for a drawer, takes out a file and sorts through...

Finds what he's looking for and his heart skips a beat. He shines the light down the letter, his hand shakes a little.

"DEAR SANTA. ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS A HAPPY FAMILY. AND A REMOTE CONTROL DUNE BUGGY. SINCERELY, DOUG MACKAY."

Will reacts.

CRACK!

CAMERA POV: He whips around. Pockets the letter quickly and uses the camera to investigate.

Something scampers across the floor... A rat? He follows it into a corner and sees it cowering, visibly shaking.

ZOOMS IN and we can see it's not a rat at all. It's somehow wearing clothing. And as it turns around, its [night vision] GREEN RETINAS glow at the camera and blink innocently...

It's a little person or...

ELF

WILL (CONT'D)
Hello?

Will whips the camera around and we see HUNDREDS OF LITTLE BEADY EYES staring back at him. BLINKING timidly.

WILL (CONT'D)
Hey... I'm Will. Santa sent me.

And that's when the creatures start to close in on him.

INT. THUG'S CAR - NIGHT

OBJECTIVE POV: The thugs drive around the city. Two in the front and Teddy squeezed between the two in the back.

THUG #1
Just go down to 45th and Ashland.
He'll give us a good price.

TEDDY
That bag's not yours to sell.

THUG #1
Oh, no? Whose is it then? Cause it sure ain't yours.

TEDDY
Santa Claus.

Huge LAUGH. Teddy owns it.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Laugh all you want. But Santa Claus is *real*. And when he finds out that you clowns took his bag of toys, there's gonna be hell to pay.

THUG #1
Yeah, well Santa Claus missed a few Christmases at my house. So, we'll just call it even.

INT. SANTA'S HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Will sits in a chair, interrogated by the HEAD ELF.

WILL
I swear. Santa's in trouble and I need your help.

The head elf SIGNALS the others, who rifle through his bag. A PUDGY LITTLE ELF finds some candy in a side pocket and scarfs it down. The head elf glowers at him and he stops...

While the rest pull out the laptop.

WILL (CONT'D)
I can explain that...

The head elf sees the other shady equipment and reacts.

WILL (CONT'D)
Look. My name is Will Mackay. And my brother Teddy is out there, watching the bag. He'll tell you the same thing...

The elf considers this. SPEAKS to the others in a STRANGE LANGUAGE. And a few elves head out to check.

A few other elves carry in a BOOK... TRUE BELIEVERS. The head elf scans the register and finds Will's name. Reacts.

Walks over to the wall and grabs a large lever. Pulls it down with all his might and...

The entire room LIGHTS UP! And we finally get a real look at

SANTA'S MAGICAL COMPOUND

And it's unbelievable! Built from ice and wood. Illuminated in Christmas light colors from inside the walls. WONDROUS AND AWE-INSPIRING -- A CHILD'S DREAM COME TRUE!

WILL (CONT'D)
(breathless)
Wow!

THOUSANDS OF ELVES mill about the rooms above, piling remaining presents on the conveyer belt that leads to the room for Santa's bag of toys.

The elf bows his head, welcoming Will. The rest follow suit.

And that's when they hear LOUD MUSIC blaring from nowhere in particular. Like the bass from a neighbor's stereo.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The thugs enter an apartment with Teddy. MUSIC IS BLASTING and a few PEOPLE are hanging out, up to no good.

The THUGS shake hands with IMANI, a big, menacing character.

THUG #1
Yo, Imani. Check this out.

Imani examines the bag and is impressed.

IMANI
Where'd you get this?

THUG #1
From that little dude.

Imani sizes up Teddy. Takes out a present, intrigued. Opens it up... And has a puzzled expression. Turns it upside down and dumps out...

A PILE OF COAL

IMANI
This some kind of a joke?

The thug realizes his error. Panics.

THUG #1
It's probably just a bad one.

The thug starts passing out presents. Everybody opens one and start coming up with the same result. COAL. The thug is clearly embarrassed. Glares at Teddy.

IMANI
The next time you clods waste my time like this there's gonna be hell to pay!

Imani grabs the bag and walks over to the BURNING FIREPLACE. Opens the screen.

TEDDY
No! Look, I know this sounds crazy but my brother's *in that bag*. And if anything happens to him I--

Teddy lunges for him. The other guys hold him back.

Teddy is reeling. Not until this moment did he really understand how much Will means to him.

Imani smiles like he's gonna let him go, but instead throws the bag on the fire. Teddy breaks through and pulls a gun out of his waistband.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Everybody get back!

Everyone is caught off guard and steps back. Teddy makes his way to the fireplace and pulls the bag out of the fire. Stomps out a few embers and clutches it against his chest.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Now just let me be on my way and no one's getting popped.

One of the thugs squints his eyes. Realizes...

THUG #1
Is that a BB Gun?

Teddy realizes the jig is up and shoots the guy in the cheek. He screams in pain and the crew descends on him.

Suddenly, two hands clutch the side of the bag and AN ELF sticks his head out. SPEAKS IN ELF GIBBERISH.

And at that, the "tough' gang bangers freak out. SCREAM and run like they just saw a David Blaine street magic trick.

THUG #1 (CONT'D)
What the what!?!

IMANI
It's a Leprechaun!

And just then, HUNDREDS OF ELVES START POURING OUT of the bag and chasing after everyone in the apartment.

People run out the door, lock themselves in bedrooms and tumble out on fire escapes.

The Pudgy Elf eats some food left on the table while chaos ensues around them.

Teddy tries to wriggle free, but the elves hold him down. Suddenly, two hands appear out of the bag and Will crawls out. The elves look up to him for direction.

WILL
It's okay. He's with me!

They let Teddy free. The elves get behind Will and Teddy sees his brother in a whole new light.

TEDDY
You're okay!

Teddy hugs his brother, tightly.

WILL
Better than okay.

TEDDY
We should get out of here.

WILL
I was thinking the same thing!

They turn to the door where one of the thugs is blocking the doorway, standing in disbelief.

Will reacts and we see why. The thug opened one of the presents and got... a brand new pair of NIKE SHOES.

THUG #2
I always wanted these.

TEDDY
Cause you're a nice guy... Aren't you?

The thug thinks about it. Steps aside and lets them go.

THUG #2
Merry Christmas...

WILL
Merry Christmas!

And they all leave the apartment.

EXT. SKY ABOVE INDUSTRIAL AREA - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: From Will atop Comet. Flying over the industrial area outside Chicago.

WILL
I feel like it was around here. I recognize these buildings but it's hard to say...

TEDDY
Over there! That patch of trees.

Will points the camera towards the trees, and as they pass them, the other reindeer come into view.

WILL
I see it!

EXT. PATCH OF TREES - NIGHT

The boys land their reindeer in the dark. Will SCANS the camera over the area and heads towards the sleigh.

WILL
Santa?

Teddy and Will look around and some of the elves crawl out of the bag to inspect the situation.

The reindeer team has been refastened together with repaired leather straps and mended headgear. But the sleigh is still damaged. The runner broken clear off.

The elves immediately get to work, repairing the sleigh.

Teddy walks up to Will, who's worried. No sign of Santa.

TEDDY
Maybe he went to get help.

WILL
He wouldn't just up and leave his sleigh like that. Something's wrong.

TEDDY
He's Santa Claus. I'm sure he's got a plan.

Will scans the area with night vision. Looks at the snow around the sleigh and sees a DROP OF BLOOD.

Will follows footprints away from the sleigh, joined by the second set of footprints. Then a patch of blood where he fell and the golf cart tracks heading into the complex.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
What? You find something?

WILL
(worried)
They've got him.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

OBJECTIVE POV: The lazy security guard waits, a phone receiver to his ear. The stern guard walks into the room.

STERN GUARD
Anything?

LAZY GUARD
They have me on hold. Guess picking up a drunken Santa isn't the department's top priority tonight. How's he doin' in there?

STERN GUARD
Passed out cold.

BUZZ!! They react. Look at the front gate monitor where Will stands at the intercom.

WILL
Excuse me? Hey. I think you may have my, um, friend in there?

LAZY GUARD
That's affirmative. We've got him in custody until the police arrive. He was trespassing and intoxicated.

Will reacts.

WILL
Please. You have to let him go. If you don't, there won't be a Christmas this year.

STERN GUARD
Look, kid. He's in no shape to be handing out any presents tonight. He'll sleep it off in a holding tank at the twenty fourth precinct and you can pick him up in the morning. Now, get out of here before I set the dogs out.

He clicks off and Will walks away, despondent.

STERN GUARD (CONT'D)
This night just keeps getting weirder and weirder.

EXT. PERIMETER OF THE COMPLEX - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: Teddy is filming the elves as they fix the sled.

TEDDY
Where do you guys come from, anyway? Middle Earth?

The head elf looks over his shoulder, annoyed. Suddenly, the elves hear someone coming. The camera whips around and...

Will trudges back up to the crash site.

WILL
He's in there. But the police are coming by to get him any minute.

TEDDY
Okay. Well, maybe we should just wait until they come and--

WILL
They're not letting him out. Trust me. And even if they did, half the night's already over.
(looking at his watch)
We've got three hours til sunrise on the East coast.

TEDDY
Then we'll just have to deliver the presents ourselves!

WILL
Teddy, Santa can jump across rooftops. Fit through chimneys. We're just boys. And we *blew it*. Epic fail. We should just find a way to get home.

Will trudges away, down. Teddy puts the camera down and grabs his brother's shoulder.

TEDDY
Hey... Dad wouldn't let a couple of rent-a-cops get in the way of Christmas and neither will we! A Mackay always sees it through!

WILL
Yeah, but... the place is enormous. He could be anywhere. And that fence has to be twenty feet high.

OBJECTIVE POV: Teddy smiles. Steps aside and Will sees the elves put the finishing touches on the sleigh. The reindeer assembled, the sleigh rises off the ground a few inches.

TEDDY
You wanna drive or should I?

INT. SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

The stern guard watches the monitors. Sees a FLASH across one of the outdoor cameras. Then it zooms past another...

STERN GUARD
Hey. Come take a look at this.

The lazy guard looks at the monitor. Reacts.

LAZY GUARD
Something's flying around the building...

SHT!! SHT!! SHHHHHHHHHH! One by one, the monitors start flipping to static.

WHUNK! All the power in the complex goes out. Oddly, the only lights that remain are the Christmas lights on the tree.

STERN GUARD
You check the generator. I'm gonna take a look outside.

That's when they hear SOMETHING SCURRY behind them. Then something else.

The guard shines a flashlight in the corner and sees something hiding behind the garbage can. Approaches it nervously when he sees the PUDGY ELF snacking on some leftover food.

The elf double takes, realizing he's there for a reason and holds out a large swirly ornament.

STERN GUARD (CONT'D)
What the hey--

The elf smiles and pushes a button on the ornament, rolls it out, releasing a CLOUD OF RED AND GREEN SMOKE.

The guards both retreat as a group of thousands of elves CRAWL UP THE FRONT DOORS and open them.

Teddy enters. Talks on his WALKIE.

TEDDY
I'm in. Any luck finding him?

EXT. INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: Will steers the reindeer over the compound.

A FIRST PERSON VIEW of riding Santa's sleigh.

WILL
Not yet. They're definitely trying to pick up his scent.

When suddenly, the reindeer slow down and start to point the sleigh downwards towards a specific part of the building. He looks down at a sky light and sees what may be Santa's feet.

WILL (CONT'D)
I think he's in a corner room at the, um, north east end of the building.

INT. SECURITY DESK - NIGHT

Teddy looks at a map and sees what he's talking about.

TEDDY
Got it. There in a sec.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The lazy security guard runs through the hallway, looking nervously behind him as the hallway fills with colored smoke and little lights.

STERN GUARD (O.S.)
Cover the atrium. They're coming for him!

LAZY GUARD
I don't get paid enough for this.

That's when he sees a FIGURE emerge through the smoke. He holds out his taser gun.

LAZY GUARD (CONT'D)
Stop! Or I'll shoot!

The figure keeps marching forward. The guard closes his eyes and fires....

ZAP! The spring-loaded taser nails the target...

And a PLASTIC SNOWMAN from the front gate display tumbles forward. Just as the guard reacts, he turns and runs into a few ROPES OF TINSEL, which are wrapped around him by elves.

INT. BACK HALLWAY - NIGHT

Teddy makes it to his location. Peers in every room until he reaches one with no window on the door. Tries to open it - locked! Takes out his pocket knife and tries to pick the lock. No luck.

A few ELVES catch up behind him.

TEDDY
Any way you can get that open?

The elves nod and slip underneath the crack in the door. Within seconds, the LOCK UNBOLTS and Teddy enters.

INT. ATRIUM ROOM - NIGHT

And there, laid out on the floor, is Santa. He doesn't look too hot. His eyes can't focus on and he can barely move.

TEDDY
Oh, my God! Santa!

Teddy runs over to him.

SANTA
Are the reindeer okay?

He's barely audible. They move closer to hear.

TEDDY
Yeah, Santa. We got 'em. And we got your bag for you too.

Teddy starts wrapping a long leather strap around his waist. Hands the other end to the elves.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Here. Go!

STERN GUARD
Hold it right there! Don't move.

Teddy turns to see the Stern Guard is in the doorway.

EXT. ABOVE THE COMPLEX - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: Will sets the camera down and jumps down onto the roof. Tries to kick the glass skylight in with no luck.

WILL
Come on...

He looks back up at the sleigh and gets an idea.

INT. ATRIUM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

OBJECTIVE POV: The stern guard moves in, freaked out.

TEDDY
Look, he's hurt. I need to take him somewhere to get help.

STERN GUARD
You're gonna stay right here until the police arrive.

Teddy looks up at Will hovering over the window. Will gives him a signal. *Here it comes...* Teddy looks at the guard.

TEDDY
Uh, yeah. That's not gonna happen.

Suddenly, the elves come up behind the guard and start wrapping him in TINSEL ROPES.

Teddy holds onto Santa tightly. The glass window on the ceiling SHATTERS and rains down in front of the guard.

THUD! The thick 'NICE' BOOK hits the floor.

The leather strap TIGHTENS and Santa and Teddy are whisked away into the sky!

Pulled out of the compound by Will in the sleigh. The elves grab the book and carry it out under the guard's legs as he's tied down in tinsel.

EXT. ABOVE THE CLOUD COVER - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: Teddy and the elves pull Santa into the sleigh. Will reacts when he sees him.

WILL
Santa!

Will puts the camera down and tends to Santa, who's in and out of consciousness. Will wells up with tears, overcome with emotion.

WILL (CONT'D)
Oh, Santa, I am so sorry.

SANTA
You're a good boy... A very good boy...

TEDDY
I think he's lost a lot of blood.

WILL
(to the elves)
Can you help him?

The head elf is at a loss. Looks worried.

TEDDY
We gotta get him to a hospital.

WILL
But if we admit him, it'll take all night. He'll miss Christmas.

TEDDY
Well, it's a better alternative than him dying, isn't it?

The brothers think about it, freaking out. Santa GROANS, half conscious and in pain. Teddy gets an idea.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Wait. I know someone who can help!

WILL
Who?

TEDDY
A friend.

EXT. MIAMI SUBURB - EARLY MORNING

OBJECTIVE POV: The faintest glow of sunlight starts to illuminate the palm trees of a quiet Miami neighborhood. The sleigh descends to roof level and lets a rope ladder down.

CAMERA POV: Teddy and Will climb down. Teddy activates the TIME in the upper corner of the screen. "12/25. 4:53AM EST"

TEDDY
It's almost five o'clock! We don't have much time.

WILL
Which house is it?

Teddy SCANS the block and ZOOMS IN on addresses.

TEDDY
That one! I think...

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

The boys sneak around to the back of the house. Teddy sees something in one of the windows... A BUTTERFLY MOBILE.

He looks around and finds a pebble. Tosses it at the window. Tosses another one. Until finally...

The window opens...

And the camera ZOOMS IN and FOCUSES ON a cute, fourteen-year-old girl sticking her head out, half asleep. Smart and sweet. This is **GRACE**. Will elbows Ted.

WILL
She's cute.

GRACE
(groggy)
Hello?

TEDDY
Grace.

GRACE
Teddy!?!
(catching herself)
Teddy?

Teddy smiles and shrugs. Grace sees the camera and covers herself. Instinctively checks her hair.

GRACE (CONT'D)
What're you-- How'd-- What's that camera for?

TEDDY
Listen, it's kind of a long story--

GRACE
Do you realize what time it is? It's Christmas morning!

TEDDY
I tried to text you but you didn't answer your phone.

Grace considers this.

GRACE
If my father saw you here right now he would--

TEDDY
Yeah, well I was hoping he could make an exception just this one time. It's kind of a medical emergency...

GRACE
Teddy. I don't underst--

JINGLE-JINGLE. And that's when she sees...

THE SLEIGH, floating two stories off the ground behind them. She reacts and looks back at Teddy.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Meet me out front.

EXT. FRONT YARD - EARLY MORNING

OBJECTIVE POV: The elves carry Santa onto the lawn when the LIGHTS come on.

TEDDY
Quick. Get out of here.

They scatter and the sleigh disappears down the street. The front door opens and Grace's parents walk out. Her father, **PETER** and mother **HEIDI** are confused and pissed.

PETER
What the hell is this all about?

TEDDY
Mister Tanner. I'm so sorry to disturb you like this, sir, but we didn't know where else to go.

Teddy extends a hand. Peter leaves him hanging.

PETER
I thought I made myself very clear how I felt about you talking to my daughter.

GRACE
Daddy! Just listen.

Peter relents.

TEDDY
Yeah, well, I know we left things on a bad note, sir--

PETER
I should say so...

TEDDY
It's just that, I was hoping we could put our differences aside and, you see... This is my brother, Will.

WILL
Yo.

TEDDY
And this is... Um...

He backs away and Peter can now see Santa on the lawn.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
This is, um...

Peter reacts to his fumbling.

WILL
Our father!

TEDDY
*Step*father. He, um, took us down here to do this whole charity, toys for tots thing, and we kinda got into an accident.

Peter approaches Santa, confused.

PETER
Well, you should have gone right to a hospital.

HEIDI
I'll call an ambulance!

WILL & TEDDY
No!

TEDDY
It's just that... He doesn't have health insurance. We were just hoping you could maybe do something for his leg... Just until we can figure it out.

Peter is pissed. Looks at Heidi who glares at him sternly until he relents and kneels down beside Santa.

PETER
What's your name?

SANTA
Santa...

Considering how out of it he is, it doesn't seem too strange. Peter checks his pulse.

PETER
His pressure's low... His clothes are freezing, but his body's warm...
(to the brothers)
Where'd you say you just came from?

They look around at the tropical setting.

WILL
Ice skating rink.

Peter examines his leg. Santa GROANS in pain.

PETER
(shaking his head)
Let's get him inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

As Peter attends to Santa Claus, Grace pulls Teddy aside.

GRACE
Teddy, who is that man on my parents' living room floor?

TEDDY
Exactly who you think it is...

GRACE
But... How can that be?

TEDDY
It just... Is.

Teddy takes out the camera and starts filming her.

CAMERA POV: Grace looks away, uncomfortable and flirtatious.

GRACE
What are you doing with that?

TEDDY
It's something my Dad used to do when he wanted to remember what was important to him.

Off her embarrassed reaction, he SCANS the house.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Nice place you got here.

GRACE
I guess. I miss Lowell. It's like ninety degrees here everyday.

TEDDY
That doesn't sound so bad.

GRACE
Just doesn't feel like Christmas...

She smiles at him. Suddenly, Teddy drapes some MISTLETOE in front of the camera, similar to how his dad did in the video.

TEDDY
Hey! Where'd that come from?

She GIGGLES. They're about to kiss.

WILL (O.S.)
Hey guys! He's coming around!

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Teddy ZOOMS IN as Santa starts to regain consciousness.

SANTA
Oh... Hello. Um, what time is it?

PETER
Five thirty.

SANTA
Which time zone?

PETER
Eastern. You've had a bad accident, but you're gonna be okay.

SANTA
I need to go.

PETER
You're not going anywhere. You've got a fractured femur. It's amazing you're even conscious with how much blood you've lost.

Santa looks into Pete's eyes. Brightens.

SANTA
Peter Tanner.

Peter reacts.

PETER
I'm afraid I don't remember you. Have we met before?

SANTA
In a way...
(to Heidi)
Heidi, could I get something with sugar? Like a cookie?

Santa sits up and everyone comes to his aid. Heidi brings him a cookie and he eats it.

HEIDI
He's already looking better.

SANTA
Folks. You don't know how thankful I am to have you help me like this. But I need to be on my way.

Santa rises and fixes an ornament on the tree.

PETER
Let me admit you into my friend's clinic. He'll work with whatever you can manage.

Santa starts to take a few steps and teeters over. Teddy and Will rush under his arms to prop him up.

SANTA
Guess I'm not as resilient as I used to be.

PETER
Look... I don't mean to pry, but what is so important that you have to do on Christmas morning?

SANTA
Just a few errands...

Santa winks and opens the door. The living room is ENSCONCED IN BRIGHT, ETHERIAL LIGHT.

Teddy looks back at Grace. Only has a moment to talk.

TEDDY
I almost forgot! I got something for you...

He hands her the SMALL PACKAGE that was returned to him.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
I thought it was a sign it got sent back, but... Merry Christmas.

She opens it up and sees, a BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLY NECKLACE.

GRACE
Oh, Teddy. It's beautiful.

WILL
C'mon! We gotta go!

Awkward moment, Teddy smiles and heads out...

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

The boys help Santa into the sleigh, which has landed on the grass. Peter and Heidi watch the scene, stunned.

Grace thinks for a moment. Breaks away from her dad and PLANTS A BIG KISS on Teddy. She walks back to her parents.

WILL
What if they tell someone?

TEDDY
Nobody would believe them.

Santa looks back at them, WAVES HIS HAND and, like magic, the Tanners' eyes gloss over...

WILL
A memory wipe.

SANTA
The only thing they'll know is that they woke up with Christmas cheer.

And as soon the sleigh TAKES OFF...

The family starts to come out of a fog. Peter looks at his wife and daughter, in a haze.

PETER
What just happened?

EXT. SKY ABOVE MIAMI - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: The sleigh soars through the sky, the boys sitting in the back seat, marveling at the view.

Santa scans the book and maps. Confers with the elves.

WILL
If you need to drop us off or something, we'll be okay.

TEDDY
Yeah, don't worry about us.

SANTA
But if I drop you off, how am I going to manage this by myself?
(off their reactions)
It's cutting it close, but I think I can still cover the continent.

The boys look up at him, stunned.

TEDDY
But... How? We can't...

Santa looks over at his elves who pull something out of the bag. Two RED STOCKING CAPS. He puts them on the boys.

WILL
What do these do?

OFF SANTA'S SMILE...

TEDDY (PRELAP)
WOOOOO HOOOOO!!!!!!

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

CAMERA POV: As Teddy runs across a rooftop and LEAPS into the air. Impossibly jumps to the next house over.

OBJECTIVE POV: As Will does the same on the houses across the street. Covering double the territory.

WILL
This is incredible!

TEDDY
So is this!

Teddy takes a running start and leaps headfirst down a thin chimney. His body impossibly morphs to fit inside.

CAMERA POV: As he pops back out and heads towards the next roof. Parkours onto the roof over and effortless flips up into a handstand.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
It's like I'm in the Christmas Matrix!

Will swerves the camera back to the sled where Santa is doling out the gifts.

SANTA
(to Will)
Skyler and Sadie Notestein.

Will catches the two gifts and dives into a chimney...

INT. RANDOM HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

We get the CAMERA'S POV as Will tumbles out of the chimney.

Tosses the presents under the tree, grabs the cookies, avoids a BARKING DOG and ZAPS back up the chimney.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Will pops back out of the chimney at the same time as Teddy. They're at the beginning of a new block.

WILL
Race you to the end of the block!

TEDDY
You're on!

And the two boys give it their all...

QUICK MONTAGE of them heading down chimneys, grabbing cookies and delivering presents, ROUSING MUSIC DRIVING US...

EXT. ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Back onto the rooftops, it's neck and neck... They both make a break for it and...

IMPOSSIBLY JUMP into the sleigh.

EXT. SANTA'S SLEIGH - NIGHT

WILL
Winner, winner lobster dinner!

TEDDY
I let you win.

WILL
You wish!

The brothers are having fun and bonding a way that they haven't in years. Santa looks at the horizon. A SLIVER OF BLUE SKY can be seen over the horizon.

SANTA
We don't have much time left...

Santa pulls back a small door on his dashboard, revealing a LARGE TIME DIAL. He carefully turns it and SLOWS TIME around them. GEESE flying by move in SLOW MOTION.

WILL
So, *that's* how he does it!

The boys look at each other, surging from the rush of their accomplishment. And hunker down to finish...

A TIME LAPSE shot of them jumping from rooftop to rooftop, impossibly fast. They look like STREAKING GHOSTS covering entire neighborhoods in minutes...

EXT. ANOTHER NEIGHBORHOOD - DAWN

The boys stand on a rooftop and look out towards a view of...

THE PACIFIC OCEAN

WILL
We did it!

TEDDY
Yeah...

Santa glides the sled over and reaches into his bag.

SANTA
Who wants to deliver the last--

He fumbles around the bag. Comes up empty.

He looks up at the boys, somber. Holds the bag upside down and nothing falls out. The mood instantly changes.

SANTA (CONT'D)
Well... Considering the circumstances, I'd say you have a lot to be proud about.

TEDDY
But... Can't we go to Toys R Us or something?

WILL
What if we leave them an IOU?

SANTA
I'm afraid that's not how it works.
(smiling)
Let's get you boys home before your mother starts to worry.

TEDDY
Wait! I want to know... Who's the kid? What did they want?

Santa SIGHS but he at least owes him that. He picks up the ledger, with hundreds of thousands of names crossed out until he gets to the bottom of the list.

SANTA
Max Haley. Ten years old. Pocket knife.

Teddy's ears perk up.

WILL
Oh, well. You'll get him two presents next year, right Santa?

SANTA
If he still believes.

Santa picks up the reins and is about to start off...

TEDDY
Wait!

Everyone looks at Teddy. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the RED SWISS ARMY KNIFE his father gave him all those years ago. Hands it over to Santa. Santa is overwhelmed by his generosity.

SANTA
Teddy... You don't have to do this.

TEDDY
I want to.

Santa hands it to the elves, who inspect the knife. Crowd around it and tinker with it until they produce something good as new and polished. The engraving has been removed.

Santa shuffles through his glove box and pulls out a little box. An elf takes off its belt and Santa uses it as a ribbon. Hands the wrapped gift to Teddy.

SANTA
Will you do the honors?

Teddy takes the present and heads off to deliver it. Will looks at him, <u>enamored once again by his older brother</u>.

WILL
Hey, Ted... Dad would be proud.
(then)
I'm proud. You're still the coolest guy I know.

Ted seems older yet has that same childlike gleam as his dad.

INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Teddy lands in the living room. A house not dissimilar from his. Sees a Christmas Tree, decorated with lots of love.

He places the gift down and is shocked to find himself filled with emotion. Takes a DEEP BREATH and *let's go*.

Looks up at the star on top of the tree. Feels a sense of gratitude and peace.

Hears a SHUFFLING upstairs and runs back to the chimney. But instead of going up, he decides to wait and watch...

A TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY comes barrelling down the stairs, his parents lagging behind him wearily.

TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY
Mom, Dad! Santa came!

MOM
(groggily)
You don't say...

The boy spots the gift, lights up with excitement.

TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY
No way!

He tears open the present and holds the box in his hand in awe. Opens the cover carefully and smiles wide when he sees the knife, practically glowing with a new shine.

The mother looks at the father.

MOM
Was that you?

The father shrugs, *don't look at me*.

TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY
He got my letter!

MOM
Be careful with that!

TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY
Don't worry, Mom. I will!

The boy hugs his parents and they open the other presents. Teddy smiles to himself and ZAPS back up the chimney.

FADE TO:

EXT. SKY ABOVE LOWELL - DAY

CAMERA POV: Lowell sparkles on a bright Christmas morning. The sleigh floats above the clouds as Santa and the boys say their good-byes. Teddy captures the moment on video

WILL
I can't believe it's already over. There are a hundred questions I never got to ask you.

SANTA
How about one?

WILL
Oh! Okay, well... I guess, I... If I really had to know one thing--

He gives it serious thought.

TEDDY
Any day there, buddy.

WILL
I don't know. I guess a lot of them have already been answered.
(thinking)
Where does your magic come from? I mean, how did this all start?

Santa smiles an all-knowing, etherial smile. Suddenly, Will is overwhelmed by a sense... A feeling. And a huge smile forms across his face. Santa looks at Teddy.

SANTA
A lot of children have made a last minute play to get off the naughty list over the years...

He puts a hand on his shoulder.

SANTA (CONT'D)
But you've shattered the record.

He reaches into the glove box and hands Teddy a present. It's a box that's the size and shape of a laptop.

TEDDY
Thanks, Santa.

SANTA
(to Will)
And your present is already waiting for you under the tree.

WILL
I know! I got it all on tape!

OBJECTIVE POV: Will takes the camera and then notices...

THE TAPE IS MISSING. He reacts, confused, until he sees...

Santa holding the tape up with an expression of apology.

SANTA
Unfortunately, I can't let this get out. You understand...

The boys deflate.

WILL
Yeah. No, of course. I just... I wish I can remember all of this.

SANTA
You know that's not possible. But everything that happened will always be in your heart.

Santa pats his own chest.

SANTA (CONT'D)
As long as you keep something here, you'll have it forever.

The boys smile as Santa stands back. Closes his eyes and waves his hand slowly across their faces... Erasing their memory as they're overwhelmed by a bright glow...

CLAIRE (PRELAP)
Boys! Wake up! It's Christmas!

INT. WILL AND TEDDY'S ROOM - DAY

Will and Teddy wake up groggily in their beds. Claire walks in and pulls their blankets back.

CLAIRE
C'mon, sleepyheads. This has got to be the first Christmas that you two haven't woken me up at the crack of dawn. It's already nine!

The brothers look at each other, woozy. They have a sense that something profound happened but no recollection.

WILL & TEDDY
The video tape!

They rush out past Claire downstairs.

CLAIRE
What videotape? Boys!

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The boys rush downstairs and open the closet where their rig remains, seemingly untouched.

TEDDY
I thought you were supposed to take the first shift!

WILL
I must have fallen asleep and sleepwalked upstairs.

TEDDY
Me too.

Teddy puts the tape in the machine connected to the TV.

CLAIRE
What's this all about?

WILL
We tried to film Santa Claus.

CLAIRE
Oh...

Teddy plays the tape and only gets STATIC. He FAST FORWARDS through it but the tape is clearly blank.

TEDDY
(realizing)
I forgot to turn it on! After all that planning... I blew it.

Teddy really feels bad. Instead of turning it into a fight, Will puts a comforting hand on his brother's shoulder.

WILL
That's okay. We'll try again next year.

CLAIRE
Well, all the proof you need is right there under the tree. See? He left you both presents...

They both notice some GIFTS under the tree. Glance at each other, surprised, and tear them open rabidly. Even Teddy lets himself open it up with kid-like abandon...

They hold up their gifts. UGLY SWEATERS.

WILL
Aunt Annmarie sure outdid herself this year.

CLAIRE
I think I see two other presents under there.

They both perk up. Will grabs his and hands Teddy one. They open the presents.

WILL
A Razor! Just the one I wanted!

Claire feigns surprise but also seems like she could have bought it herself.

CLAIRE
How about that? Teddy, what did you get from Santa?

Teddy tries to pull the string off but it's tied tightly.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Why don't you use your knife?

He checks his pockets but can't find it.

TEDDY
Don't have it.

Doesn't seem to mind. She finds scissors and cuts it the string. Teddy skeptically peels back a piece of wrapping paper. Is amazed to see... A LAPTOP. Just like he wanted.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
But I thought... Don't we need the money?

CLAIRE
Well. I guess you can call it a Christmas miracle.

Teddy sees something under the tree, marked 'CLAIRE'.

TEDDY
There's one for you too!

Surprised, Claire opens it up. It's a NEW PICTURE FRAME with a PHOTO OF HER AND THE BOYS. She wells up with happiness.

CLAIRE
I love this picture. Thank you.

WILL
Thank Santa. And look what I found... It was in my pocket.

He holds up DOUG'S CHRISTMAS LETTER from when he was eight. The family all read it together. Share a bittersweet moment.

CLAIRE
Looks like everyone got their wish.

She kisses both of her kids and heads into the kitchen.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
It must be Christmas. You two aren't even fighting.

The boys realize... She's right. They fawn over their presents. Teddy looks over at Will, caught up in the spirit.

TEDDY
Hey, Will... Merry Christmas.

WILL
Yeah. You too. Merry Christmas.

Teddy goes to help Claire when he notices something under the tree. He gets on his knees and reaches far back to the quickly wrapped present. Will kneels down next to him.

TEDDY
It's for both of us.

The card says "TO TEDDY AND WILL. FOR YOUR EYES ONLY. S.C." He opens it up and examines it, curiously. Hands it to Will who looks at a VIDEO TAPE.

It's crudely marked "**12/24**" in red ink. Intrigued, Will pops it in the VCR. Presses PLAY...

END CREDITS.

INT. WILL AND TEDDY'S ROOM - DAY

LAPTOP CAMERA POV: It's a few weeks later. Teddy talks into the camera in his room, a SMALL VIDEO SQUARE OF GRACE in the upper corner. She's wearing her BUTTERFLY NECKLACE but the conversation is serious.

TEDDY
I thought about what you were saying the other night. It makes a lot of sense, but...

GRACE
I know how you feel, Teddy. It's not easy for me either.

Will walks into his room, Razor Caster Board under his arm.

WILL
Oh, sorry. I didn't know you were--

TEDDY
It's okay.
(to Grace)
Will's here. Talk later?

GRACE
Yeah. Bye.

OBJECTIVE POV: Teddy swirls around in his seat.

TEDDY
Hey, you wanna play Mario Cart or something? I just have to finish up this homework.

WILL
That seemed like heavy conversation. Everything okay?

Teddy sighs.

TEDDY
It's just this long distance thing is tough... I don't know. Maybe it's not true love between us.

WILL
It is if Cupid hits you with an arrow.

TEDDY
Dude. There's no such thing as--

Suddenly, the brothers go wide-eyed, sharing the same thought. They both look at the video camera on the shelf.

THE END