

# TRACKING SANTA

## By Tim Kochenderfer

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(10-31; 2-3 Females, 8-9 Males, 0-19 Either; Doubling possible)*

ANNOUNCER	MAYOR
ANGELA NAVIDAD	WAITRESS
ERIC EMBERS	CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
PHIL PHILSTON	TOW TRUCK DRIVER
SHOPPER #1	TOW TRUCK DRIVER #2
SHOPPER #2	SANTA CLAUS
SHOPPER #3	HUSBAND
TIM	WIFE
CHUCK	TOWNSPEOPLE (0-10)
DAVE	KITE FLYERS (3)

### DOUBLING

Announcer can play Dave, Santa Claus  
Shopper #1 can play Chuck, city council member, husband, kite flyer  
Shopper #2 can play waitress, wife, kite flyer  
Shopper #3 can play tow truck driver, kite flyer

### SET

SCENE ONE: The stage is divided into two scenes, the news studio and a shopping mall. The news studio features an anchor desk and a weather board, which can simply be a large map. The shopping mall can have a store front backdrop, or no back drop at all. As the anchor tosses to the reporter the lights go up and down on the scenes, appropriately.

SCENE TWO: The newsroom. All that's needed is a few desks.

SCENE THREE: The news van. This could be as simple as a couple of chairs placed side by side in front of the curtains as Dave pretends he is driving. Angela and Eric could burst through the curtains as if flying in from the back seat.

SCENE FOUR: The Diner. Tables and chairs would work.

SCENE FIVE: The town. A small town backdrop would be nice, but not necessary. All that is needed are some Christmas decorations and a Christmas tree.

**SOUND**

Music that sounds like it would be the theme of a newscast, however, if you need you could eliminate the music.

Sleigh bells

Christmas Music

**PROPERTIES**

Cell Phone

Christmas tree

Christmas decorations

Shopping bags

**COSTUMES**

Shirt and Tie for Eric and Phil

Business casual for Angela

Santa Claus suit for Santa

Sash that reads “mayor” for the Mayor

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### SCENE ONE

***The studio. News music plays. The lights go up revealing anchor ANGELA NAVIDAD and meteorologist ERIC EMBERS sitting behind an anchor desk.***

ANNOUNCER: (*heard, not seen*) You're watching Channel 8 news Detroit, where 8 stands for news, so that saying 8 and news together is redundant. And now, 8 news at six.

ANGELA: A winter storm is heading our way on this Christmas Eve, threatening to dump a foot of snow over our area. Good evening, I'm Angela Navidad. Let's get right to meteorologist Eric Embers. Eric, one foot of snow doesn't sound like a lot, but if you're the person who's standing under that one foot of snow when it falls, you're in a world of hurt.

ERIC: Well, we're not talking about one square foot of snow falling all at once in one spot. We're talking about a foot of snow falling over our entire area over a period of several hours.

ANGELA: So a foot of snow divided by the entire Detroit area over a period of time? So we're just talking about a couple of flakes? Let's move on. (*shifts attention to audience*) Tonight is the...

ERIC: No! We're talking about a winter storm so powerful that, by the time it's through, our whole area will be buried under a foot of snow.

ANGELA: (*startled*) Ah! So you're talking about a storm that could dump ten million feet of snow over Detroit?!

ERIC: (*pause*) ...if ...no ...I mean, yeah, if we measured snowfall horizontally, but we don't. (*to audience*) Listen, right now, all of Southeastern Michigan is under a winter storm warning. Tonight, Channel 8 is launching some exciting new technology. It's called Cyclone 8000. No other station in the entire country has a weather tracking system this powerful. Cyclone 8000 can tell you down to the second when precipitation will start falling, it can even tell you the exact number of snowflakes in a storm. We'll have more on the blizzard later on, plus it's Christmas Eve and that means we're keeping our eye on the man in the red suit.

ANGELA: I'm a woman! And this suit is blue!

ERIC: Not you! I'm talking of course about Saint Nick. I've activated the Santa Tracking device on Cyclone 8000, we'll show you exactly where Kris Kringle is, coming up.

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ANGELA: Alright Eric, looking forward to finding out where all three of those guys are. Well, like Eric said, that storm is coming and it's Christmas Eve,

*(Lights up on PHIL PHILSTON outside of a shopping mall on the other side of the stage. There are SHOPPERS milling about behind him.)*

let's head out to Channel 8 news reporter Phil Philston, live in Waterford, where last minute shoppers are trying to beat the storm and the clock. Phil have you finished your holiday shopping?

PHIL: Well, just about Angela, not quite yet...

ANGELA: Well that's certainly not setting a very good example for our viewers, is it?

PHIL: *(pause, put off)* Looking forward to having you back on the streets as a reporter Angela.

*(Lights down on ANGELA in the studio.)*

Earlier in the evening, we were having trouble finding any last minute Christmas shoppers. Then, our producer insisted we leave the station and head to a mall and lo and behold, we found lots of people trying to beat the clock.

*(PHIL stops SHOPPER #1 walking by with a small bag.)*

Sir, why did you wait until Christmas Eve to finish your holiday shopping?

SHOPPER #1: *(panics)* It's Christmas Eve?! Crap! *(runs off)*

PHIL: Yes, well.

*(PHIL nabs SHOPPER #2.)*

Sir, can you tell me why you waited until the last minute to finish your Christmas shopping?

SHOPPER #2: Well, I guess it all dates back to my childhood. I was five years old and my mother...

PHIL: No time for you...

*(SHOPPER #2 walks away offended, PHIL stops SHOPPER #3.)*

And why did you wait until Christmas Eve to finish your holiday shopping?

SHOPPER #3: My calendar broke.

PHIL: What do you mean your calendar broke?

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SHOPPER #3: I don't know, it stopped working. I opened it up last January and it never changed after that. Thought it was January the whole year. I mean sure, I thought at one point it was unseasonably hot for January. There were other points where I thought it was unseasonably Halloweeny for January. Had no idea my calendar was defective until my boss called me and told me to get out of the office, it's Christmas eve.

PHIL: Sir, you don't set a calendar. You just keep changing it as time passes.

SHOPPER #3: No you're thinking of a clock.

PHIL: No I'm not. *(turns towards the audience)* So there you have it, Angela. Everyone out shopping tonight is an idiot.

*(Lights back up on ANGELA and ERIC at the desk.)*

Live in Waterford, Phil Philston, Channel 8 news, back to you.

ANGELA: People shopping at the last minute for different reasons tonight, certainly busts any conspiracy theories doesn't it Phil?

PHIL: What conspiracy theories?

ANGELA: That people all shop at the last minute on Christmas Eve for the same reason.

PHIL: That's not a conspiracy theory Angela, that's just a bizarre assumption.

ANGELA: Phil Philston reporting from Waterford tonight.

*(Lights down on PHIL.)*

And if you haven't finished your Christmas shopping yet, not to worry. Just log onto our Web Site, Channel Eight Detroit stands for news weather and sports dot com, slash holidays, slash Christmas, slash shopping, slash stores, slash hours, slash December, slash 24, underscore open, underscore late, underscore presents, underscore gifts. We've got a complete list of stores that are open late on Christmas Eve. Let's check back in with Eric now and get the latest on that blizzard heading our way.

ERIC: Well, I'll tell you what's not going to arrive late Angela, this storm. Our new weather tracking technology, Cyclone 8000 reports this system is carrying hundreds of millions of snowflakes.

ANGELA: Now to put that in perspective, Eric, that would be kind of like brining all of the people in the entire world to Southeastern Michigan, multiplying them, shrinking them down to just a couple of centimeters and then dropping them out of an airplane, would it not?

ERIC: *(flustered)* Well... well yeah, I guess, but... Listen, *(gets up and moves to the weather board)* We're going to start seeing the first

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flakes falling in the Brighton and Plymouth Township area around 7 tonight. When it's all done, we'll have about a foot of snow on the ground. Now, as promised, Cyclone 8000 is helping us track Santa Claus on this Christmas Eve...

*(The weather board features a map of the world. There are two Santas, one over the North Pole, one slightly over the Arctic Ocean.)*

And jolly old Saint Nicholas appears to have just left the North Pole, his reindeer moving at a good speed and.... *(looks at the board)* Hmm. That's funny. Well, Cyclone 8000 seems to be showing two Santa Clauses. Well, obviously this must be some sort of error. Our director must have hit some sort of button that... *(grabs ear, startled, as if someone's yelling at him through his earpiece)* Ah! I'm being told it's definitely not the director's fault. We'll get this problem fixed for you and continue to keep an eye on the storm.

ANGELA: You heard it here first. There are two Santas.

ERIC: No! That's not what I...

ANGELA: Coming up, is the military working on a secret new missile filled with mistletoe? You'll hear from a top general who says to stop wasting his time. Channel 8 News at six will be right back.

*(Lights down)*

### SCENE TWO

***The newsroom. TIM sits working at his desk. CHUCK sits working behind the assignment desk. Enter ANGELA talking on her cell phone.***

ANGELA: *(into the phone; excited)* So... What did you think?! *(pause)* The show, tonight. It was my first time filling in at the anchor desk! *(pause)* You missed it?! I can't believe you missed your own daughter's first time at the anchor desk, you're so unsupportive mom! *(pause)* You know, that whole 'I live in a different state' excuse is getting really old. *(pause)* It won't be the same. *(pause)* Look, I can't just bring all the scripts and reenact the newscast next time I come home, you need other people to.... *(pause)* How many puppets? *(pause)* Look, I got to go mom, love you. *(ANGELA hangs up; to TIM)* So... What did you think?! What did you think?! What did you think?!

TIM: About what?

ANGELA: My first time at the anchor desk?!

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TIM: Oh yeah. Well... It was something.

ANGELA: What do you mean it was something?

TIM: Well, the show ran two minutes over because you kept asking reporters unnecessary questions.

ANGELA: Ugh! You're just like my mother! Critical, unsupportive... You bake amazing pies....

*(Enter PHIL.)*

PHIL: Did that story work out for you at six?

TIM: *(looks up)* Ah! Phil! What are you doing back at the station?!

PHIL: The producer called and told us to come back.

TIM: I am the producer!

PHIL: You must have called and told us to come back.

TIM: I did not!

PHIL: Maybe you pocket dialed us.

TIM: I didn't pocket dial you and tell you to come back!

PHIL: Hey, our piece at six was good. Why don't you just rerun it at eleven and I'll kind of go home.

TIM: You want me to run a piece about last minute holiday shoppers trying to hit the stores before a blizzard at eleven pm?

PHIL: Yes.

TIM: At eleven pm when stores will be closed and the snow will be falling?

PHIL: Sounds like Emmy material. I'm out. *(PHIL turns to leave.)*

TIM: Come back! You're tracking the storm tonight.

PHIL: Come on man, I have a dentist appointment in the morning.

TIM: You don't have a dentist appointment on Christmas morning.

PHIL: *(pause; to self)* I certainly should have thought that one out better.

TIM: Look dude, you think I want to be here on Christmas Eve? I'm only here because Lyle called in fake sick.

ANGELA: You don't know that she's fake sick.

TIM: She told Chuck she couldn't come in because she has a fake disease.

CHUCK: Hey! How was I supposed to know fake disease wasn't a real disease?

*(Enter ERIC.)*

ERIC: Hey, Tim...

ANGELA: Eric! How do you think it went?

ERIC: How do I think what went?

ANGELA: My first show!

ERIC: *(pause)* Um... I'm sorry, you're breaking up.

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ANGELA: What?

TIM: When is that storm hitting?

ERIC: (*excited*) I have something bigger than the storm. Every Christmas Eve we do that Santa tracker gag. We create a Santa graphic, we put it near the North Pole, we tell the kids we're tracking Santa... Anyway, I did that during tonight's show, only I didn't realize, I accidentally entered search parameters into Cyclone 8000 for a sleigh and nine reindeer. It found Santa!

(*EVERYONE just stares at ERIC.*)

PHIL: (*to TIM*) Seriously, can I go home?

ERIC: No! Listen that second Santa during the show, I thought it was a mistake. I looked at it after the show. Cyclone 8000 shows an object, the size of a sleigh, being carried through the air at incredible speeds by nine reindeer-like objects.

TIM: Are you sure it's not something else?

ERIC: Like what?

TIM: Like whiskey in the weather office?

ERIC: I haven't been drinking!

PHIL: Listen, Gene...

ERIC: Eric!

PHIL: Eric, I've been in this business a long time and if I've learned anything, it's that there is a perfectly logical explanation for everything. That sleigh you think you see is probably nothing more than a flying saucer. Those flying reindeer... probably just... flying horses.

ERIC: What does this look like to you!

(*ERIC pulls out his cell phone and shows PHIL.*)

PHIL: Looks like a cell phone!

ERIC: No! I have Cyclone 8000 linked up here. Look!

TIM: Don't you think the military would have seen this too?

PHIL: I called the military, talked to a sergeant. He laughed at me.

Then when I finished telling him jokes, I told him about the Santa thing and he hung up on me!

TIM: What about the National Weather Service?

PHIL: They don't have a system this powerful. No one does.

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ANGELA: Couldn't it just be a computer error? I mean my computer makes mistakes all the time. Just the other day it said it performed an illegal operation and then shut itself down. I called the police right away and they laughed at me. Then, after I finished telling them jokes, I told them what happened with the computer and they hung up on me.

ERIC: Cyclone 8000 doesn't make mistakes. Look out the window.

*(EVERYONE looks. ERIC looks at his phone.)*

You will see the first flakes of this storm falling in three.... two.... one...

ALL but ERIC: Whoa!

PHIL: Alright, now make it lightning.

ERIC: It doesn't control the weather! It's just incredibly accurate.

Cyclone 8000 has been able to predict every stop this Santa-like object is making. At 10:30 tonight he stops in the village of Holly.

We need to get a crew up there. This is the story of a lifetime!

PHIL: Ahem, I've already done the story of a lifetime. Man with beard of bees gets into fight with man with beard of birds...

ERIC: Dude, I'm telling you, you have to get Phil up there.

PHIL: No!

TIM: The Village of Holly is an hour away. Two hours in the snow.

PHIL: Plus, you're not taking into account the fact that I am incredibly tired!

ANGELA: Don't send Phil up there. Send me!

PHIL: Yeah, send that girl.

*(ANGELA grabs ERIC's cell phone.)*

ANGELA: This has Emmy written all over it. *(looks closer)* Oh wait, that says Cyclone 8000.

*(ERIC takes his phone back.)*

ERIC: This is my discovery. If Phil's not going, send me!

PHIL: Yeah, send that guy.

TIM: I'm not sending my anchor and my meteorologist forty miles away in a blizzard to find Santa Claus. Phil, you're going!

PHIL: Look.... I can't come to work today because I'm sick.

TIM: You're already at work!

PHIL: Dang it!

TIM: If it turns out to be nothing, just do a weather report from up there.

PHIL: *(upset)* Fine! What does this Santa Claus look like?

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*(EVERYONE is disgusted.)*

ERIC: Seriously?!

ANGELA: You don't know what Santa Claus looks like?!

ERIC: What, have you been living under a rock?

PHIL: Have I been living in Iraq?

ERIC: *(to TIM; flustered)* He's gonna mess this up!

TIM: Everyone! Phil, you're going to Holly. Eric, weather office.

Angela.... Go... go wherever you go.

*(EVERYONE groans. ERIC and ANGELA head in one direction. PHIL heads in another. TIM turns towards the assignment desk. As soon as TIM turns, ERIC and ANGELA run out in PHIL's direction.)*

TIM: *(to CHUCK)* It's like I'm working with nine-year-olds or something.

CHUCK: My wife says its like that at her work too.

TIM: Your wife's a fourth grade teacher.

CHUCK: Yeah, I know. A lot of them are ten! It's ridiculous. *(CHUCK looks out the window.)*

TIM: That's not ridiculous. Listen, call up the Oakland County Road Commission and find out how many salt trucks they've got out tonight. See if budget cuts this spring will mean fewer plows out on the roads.

CHUCK: Why don't you have Phil, Eric or Angela count them on their way up to Holly?

TIM: Phil's the only one going to Holly.

CHUCK: Really? Because I just saw Eric and Angela sneak into the back of Phil's truck just before it drove off.

TIM: What?! I told them to stay here! *(TIM pulls out a phone and dials.)*

CHUCK: You trying to call Phil? *(CHUCK pulls out a phone)* His phone's right here.

TIM: What?

CHUCK: He sometimes gets his cell phones confused with the phones in the newsroom. He took the phone from Lyle's desk.

TIM: How could he... That phone was plugged in! It's huge! I don't believe this! A blizzard is about to hit and we've got no talent in the building!

CHUCK: Speak for yourself.

TIM: If Glenn finds out, we're going to get fired! I have to go after them.

CHUCK: Wait! I have an idea. Tell me what you think about this...

TIM: Okay.

CHUCK: What if we do nothing?

TIM: You're an idiot. I'll be back. If anyone calls I'm in the bathroom.

CHUCK: What if no one calls? Are you still in the bathroom?

TIM: Shut up! (*Exit TIM.*)

**SCENE THREE**

***The news van. PHIL sits in the passenger seat. DAVE, the photographer drives as Christmas music plays.***

PHIL: Turn off the radio. I'm sick of Christmas Carols.

(*DAVE turns off the radio. There is a brief moment of silence.*)

DAVE: Mind if I put in a CD?

PHIL: Suit yourself.

(*DAVE puts in a CD. Christmas carols begin to play.*)

PHIL: Hey! (*PHIL turns off the radio.*) I said I'm sick of Christmas carols!

DAVE: Oh.

(*There is a brief moment of silence.*)

Want to sing Christmas Carols?

PHIL: No! Why would I want to sing carols when I just told you to turn off the radio because I'm sick of carols!

DAVE: Oh right, sorry. (*pause*) You want to talk about our feelings?

PHIL: No!

DAVE: How about our childhoods?

PHIL: No! Come on man!

DAVE: Well we've got to do something! We're driving all the way to Holly! I'm gonna get hypnotized by all this snow!

PHIL: Snow doesn't hypnotize people. You're thinking of magicians.

DAVE: No I'm not! The snow's hypnotic man! Look at it!

PHIL: Of all the photographers here you are something else. (*mocking*) Oh the snow's hypnotizing me! Let's not park in the center lane of the road, it's illegal!

(*DAVE starts getting hypnotized.*)

Let's not pretend the truck is broken so we can get out of a live shot, we're going to get fired. Honestly, you need to relax man! You're a huge chicken!

(*DAVE jolts suddenly and starts squawking like a chicken.*)

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DAVE: Bwwwwuck, buck, buck, buck, buck, buck...

PHIL: Yep, one of those.

DAVE: Buck, buck, buck, buck, buck, buck, buck...

PHIL: *(not amused)* Yeah, that's what they say.

DAVE: Buck, buck, buck, buck...

*(DAVE looks at PHIL and starts pecking him like corn.)*

PHIL: Ah!

DAVE: Buck, buck, buck, buck, buck...

PHIL: Ah! What are you doing?! Watch the road please!

*(PHIL shoos DAVE away. HE squawks loudly and starts flapping his arms like wings.)*

DAVE: Squawk!! Squawk!! Buck, buck, buck, buck...

*(The news truck jolts violently. PHIL tries to grab the steering wheel but the vehicle crashes, sending ERIC flying into the front seat.)*

ERIC: Ah!!

PHIL: Ah!

DAVE: Sqquuuuaaaaaawwwkkkk!!!! *(DAVE runs off stage frantic, like a frightened chicken.)*

PHIL: Dave?! Dave!! Great!! *(sees ERIC, startled)* Ah!!! Evan!

ERIC: *(offended)* Eric!

PHIL: What are you doing here?!

ERIC: What did you do to Dave?!

PHIL: I didn't do anything!

ERIC: You didn't do anything?! You hypnotized him, made him think he was a chicken!

PHIL: I did not!

ERIC: I can't believe you would take advantage of that situation, especially while a man's driving!

PHIL: Who said you could stowaway in my truck?! You know what we used to do to stowaways back in my day? We'd tie them up and toss them right out of the box car. Of course in those days we took trains to our live reports...

ERIC: You did not!

PHIL: We did so!

ERIC: No you didn't! What, they just had tracks that coincidentally lead to every story you needed to cover?

PHIL: Sometimes we had to cover stuff from very far away.

ERIC: You're a huge liar!

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*(ANGELA comes flying into the front seat.)*

ANGELA: Ahhhh!!!

ERIC and PHIL: *(startled)* Ah!

ERIC: What the...

ANGELA: Sorry, I just now realized we got into an accident.

ERIC: Where did you come from?

ANGELA: I was hiding in the back.

ERIC: No you weren't. I was back there the whole time.

ANGELA: I know! I said hi!

ERIC: You're here trying to get the scoop on my story!

ANGELA: It's not your story, it's Phil's story. *(Puts her arm around PHIL)* I'm here to steal it from Phil.

PHIL: Thank you Amanda...

ANGELA: *(offended)* Angela!

ERIC: Hey! This is my story, I discovered it! I'm the one tracking Santa and I'm going to be the one who will be there when he lands!

ANGELA: Oh come on! You're a weather man. What are you going to ask him? What's the weather like up there?

ERIC: Oh and what exactly were you going to ask him?!

ANGELA: *(pause; ashamed)* I was going to ask him what the weather is like up there too.

*(TIM walks up to the truck and opens the door.)*

TIM: *(angry)* Hey!

PHIL: Ah! Bear!

TIM: *(to PHIL, offended)* Tim! *(sarcastically nice)* Hey, how is everybody? You having a nice Christmas Eve?

PHIL: Well, no we just crashed.

TIM: *(furious)* Silence! I specifically told you not to leave the building and what did you.... Where's Dave?

PHIL: He ran away.

TIM: What do you mean he ran away?

PHIL: What do you think I mean? He started acting like a chicken, crashed the van and ran away.

ERIC: Phil hypnotized him.

*(PHIL hits ERIC in the arm in anger.)*

TIM: You hypnotized a man while he was driving?! What's the matter with you!

PHIL: I didn't hypnotize him!

TIM: *(to ERIC and ANGELA)* And you two! I specifically told you to stay at the station and what did you do?!

ANGELA: *(pause)* Stayed at the station like you told us to?

TIM: No! You snuck out so you could selfishly get the scoop on a story! We're in the middle of a winter storm and we don't have an anchor or a meteorologist in the building. Now, because I had to chase after you guys, we don't have a producer either!

PHIL: *(to TIM)* Pretty irresponsible of you.

TIM: *(to PHIL, furious)* I ought to...

ERIC: I've come this far, I'm not leaving. Cyclone 8000 shows that Santa Claus is right on track to land in the village of Holly and I'm going to be there when he does!

TIM: Do you have any idea how stupid that sounds?

ERIC: Why don't you just drive Angela back?

ANGELA: *(offended)* Yeah? Well why don't you just... punch Eric?!

TIM: I can't drive anybody back! I hit a patch of ice. My car did 180s almost all the way here until I finally crashed.

ERIC: Don't you mean your car did 360s?

TIM: Who are you? Pythagoras?

PHIL: Well, you guys can sit here all you want. I'm going home.

TIM: How?

PHIL: I... Shoot. I should have thought that out before I said it.

TIM: Look, there's a diner about a half mile up the road. We can go there and call the station and have someone pick us up.

ANGELA: What about Dave?

PHIL: Forget him. The hunters don't get him, the coyotes will.

TIM: We'll figure that out later. Let's go!

*(THEY ALL get out of the truck. Lights down)*

#### SCENE FOUR

***A diner. ANGELA, PHIL, ERIC and TIM sit at a booth. TIM is on ERIC's phone. The MAYOR sits at a booth nearby.***

TIM: *(into phone)* Chuck... It's Tim, I... Listen, the news truck crashed. I need you to come pick us up. We're at a diner off of I-75 near... *(pause)* No, I'm not in the bathroom right now. *(pause)* I'm not in the bathroom right now, I'm on the phone with you! *(pause)* What do you mean I can't come to the phone?! I'm on the phone! *(pause)* No, I'm not going to call me back! I'm not trying to reach me! *(pause)* Chuck, no... Chuck!

*(TIM pulls the phone away from his ear, looks at it and hangs up. HE hands the phone back to ERIC.)*

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Idiot! Chuck's not coming.

ERIC: *(looks at his phone)* Santa touches down in Holly in just two hours. We've got to figure out a way to get there.

ANGELA: Hmm. What if we get him to come to us?

ERIC: How?

ANGELA: What is the one thing Santa Claus loves more than anything else in the world?

ERIC: Children.

ANGELA: Wrong. Cookies. We get an airplane, load it with cookies and drop a trail from Holly to here.

ERIC: We can't even find a car, let alone an airplane and even if we did find an airplane, why wouldn't we just fly ourselves to Holly?

ANGELA: Eric, that plane can't fit all of us!

ERIC: What plane?!

TIM: Stop talking about Santa Claus! Even if we did manage to get to Holly, we don't have a camera, we don't have a live truck, we don't have a producer, anchor or meteorologist back at the station, so we're not going to have a newscast and when Glenn find out, we're not going to have jobs!

PHIL: *(scoffs)* I wouldn't worry about it.

TIM: You don't think we're going to get fired for this?

PHIL: Oh no, you're all definitely going to get fired. I'm just saying that I personally am not going to worry about it.

*(A WAITRESS walks up.)*

WAITRESS: My name's Kathleen, I'll be your waitress tonight. What can I get... Hey, I recognize ya'll.

*(ANGELA and ERIC give a proud smile.)*

Yeah, yeah, you're on TV.

ANGELA: Channel 8.

WAITRESS: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes! Ya'll are from that fabric softener commercial!

ERIC: What?

WAITRESS: Yes, yes, yes. *(points to ERIC)* You're that talking teddy bear. *(points to ANGELA)* You're the Laundry. *(points to PHIL)* You're the washing machine *(points to TIM)* and you're the bottle of detergent! How exciting!

ANGELA: We're on the news.

WAITRESS: Great! Soft clothing should make the news. It's about time we heard some good news.

ANGELA: No, I mean we're on the...

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WAITRESS: Listen. (to PHIL) I know you probably get this all the time, but... Well... It would be a real honor if I could do a load of laundry in you. Would that be okay?

PHIL: No!

WAITRESS: Wow. Some real life celebrities. Just wait until I tell the mayor.

*(The WAITRESS nudges the MAYOR who is sitting at the table right next to them.)*

Hey, Mister Mayor, look! Real life celebrities! Right here in our diner!

*(The MAYOR stands up. HE wears a sash that reads Mayor.)*

MAYOR: Well, this is indeed an honor! Tell me, are you heading to town for the annual Village of Holly Christmas Extravaganza?!

TIM: Heading to town for what?

MAYOR: Ah ha! I knew you were! I knew you were! Well let me just say, our little event is missing a teddy bear, a pile of laundry, a washing machine and a bottle of detergent. If you all are interested, we'd love to make you a part of the parade down Main Street.

ERIC: You're holding a parade during a blizzard?!

MAYOR: Yup!

ERIC: Isn't that dangerous?

MAYOR: Can't believe everything you hear son. You just have to put things in perspective. Did you know that each year, more people are killed by disease than they are by blizzards?

ERIC: Well obviously, but...

MAYOR: Besides, we don't really know if this blizzard heading our way is a massive storm, or just an ice cream treat.

ERIC: Yes we do!

TIM: Listen, we're not inanimate objects from some fabric softener commercial!

MAYOR: Oh no, I didn't mean to imply that. You are all quite animate!

TIM: No, we're on the news. We're part of the Channel 8 news team!

MAYOR: And you've come all this way to cover our event! Magnificent!

TIM: We can't cover anything because our truck broke down.

MAYOR: Well that's not a problem friend. I could give you all a ride.

That is, if you don't mind riding in a limousine.

ANGELA: You rode here in a limo?

MAYOR: Did I say limo? I meant sport utility vehicle.

ERIC: That's perfect. Cyclone 8000 shows we've got an hour and fifteen minutes before it starts snowing again. Your sport utility vehicle will be fine.

MAYOR: Did I say sport utility vehicle? I meant pickup truck bed.

PHIL: Pickup truck bed? In this weather?

MAYOR: Did I say pickup truck? I meant tractor.

TIM: Let's just take it, before he ends up offering us a piggyback ride.

MAYOR: Did I say piggyback ride? I...

TIM: Shut up! Let's go.

*(Lights down)*

### SCENE FIVE

***The Village of Holly. The town is decked out for Christmas, complete with a Christmas tree. PEOPLE are milling about. Enter TIM, the MAYOR, ANGELA, PHIL and ERIC.***

MAYOR: I hope ya'll enjoyed the ride!

TIM: What ride?! You didn't have any sort of vehicle! We walked all the way here!

*(A CITY COUNCIL MEMBER runs up to the MAYOR.)*

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER: Mister Mayor! Mister Mayor! Huge disaster!! The town Christmas tree! Right after we decorated it, it started going crazy! It kicked Steve Thompson and Ben Harthway over and gored three people!

MAYOR: The Christmas tree did that?

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER: Yes! We tried to calm it down by waving red capes in front of it but... *(looks off stage in fright)* Ahhh!! There goes the Christmas tree now!

MAYOR: You idiot! That's not the Christmas tree! You decorated farmer Johnson's bull!

*(The CITY COUNCIL MEMBER and the MAYOR run off stage.)*

ANGELA: I want to go home.

TIM: *(looks at cell phone)* Oh hey look, I got my cell phone signal back. 162 missed calls. *(pause)* Oh, here come the text messages. 74 of them. All from Glenn. *(reads)* Make sure you hit weather hard tonight. *(looks up)* Duh. *(reads)* Found out you've all left the station, what's wrong with you?! *(pause)* You have fifteen minutes to get

back to the station or you're fired. You have fourteen minutes to get back to the station or you're fired. You have thirteen minutes to get back. You have twelve minutes. You have eleven minutes. You have ten minutes. I miss you, I wish you were here?! *(pause; to ALL)* Oh, that one's from my fiancé. *(reads)* You have ten minutes or you're all fired. You have nine minutes or you're all fired. I miss you, I wish you were here. *(pause; to ALL)* Well that one definitely was from Glenn. *(looks at phone)* Oh, he goes on *(reads)* sorry, I meant to send that to my fiancé, you have five minutes or you're fired. You have four minutes, three minutes, two minutes, one minute. You're all fired. It has been one minute since you've been fired. And he goes on for about another hour here.

ANGELA: Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh. I can't believe I've been fired!

PHIL: *(scoffs)* Fired?! Ha, ha! Fired doesn't mean anything in this business!

ANGELA: It doesn't?

PHIL: No! It... Wait, I meant to say fired doesn't mean anything in French. In this business it means you've lost your job.

*(ANGELA sobs. ERIC is walking slowly across the stage with his cell phone raised in the air.)*

ERIC: *(excited)* Guys! This is the spot! Santa is going to land right here! *(looks at phone)* Cyclone 8000 shows he's one minute away!

ANGELA: *(still sobbing)* Eric, we just lost our jobs!

ERIC: Yeah. So?

ANGELA: So?

ERIC: So, we're about to meet Santa Claus! Tell him you want your job back for Christmas.

ANGELA: You think Glenn will listen to him?

ERIC: *(cracks knuckles in a threatening manner)* Oh, Santa has his ways. *(pause)* Sorry, I didn't mean to imply violence there. My knuckles were getting stiff. 15 seconds!

*(EVERYONE rushes around ERIC looking up.)*

PHIL: I don't see anything.

ERIC: Shh! Do you hear that?!

*(EVERYONE listens.)*

TIM: No.

ERIC: Yeah, me neither, I was hoping there'd be some sort of sound that would back me up. Okay, five seconds. Four, three, two, one!

*(Nothing happens.)*

One!

*(Pause, EVERYONE waits.)*

I said one!

*(Nothing happens.)*

ANGELA: Where is he?

ERIC: I don't... I don't understand. According to Cyclone 8000, he's right here. It shows he just pretty much landed on Phil.

PHIL: That jerk!

TIM: Well, he's obviously not here!

ERIC: It says he's here! It shows him getting out of his sleigh! He should be stepping on Phil's face...

PHIL: *(panics)* Ah! Get him off me! Get him off!

*(TIM looks up.)*

TIM: Eric. It's snowing.

ERIC: Who cares.

TIM: Back at the diner, Cyclone 8000 said it wouldn't snow for another hour and fifteen minutes. That was an hour ago.

ERIC: What?! *(looks at phone)* Cyclone 8000 says it's not snowing right now. That must not be snow.

TIM: Well, what is it then?

ERIC: Well, if I had to guess I would say it's some sort of precipitation in the form of ice crystals, mainly of intricately branched, hexagonal form, likely created directly from the freezing of the water vapor...  
Crap, that is snow! I don't understand. Cyclone 8000 is never wrong.

TIM: Well it is. And maybe when you entered the fake Santa into the system, it probably screwed up and created another fake Santa.

ANGELA: So a fake Santa should be landing here any minute?

TIM: No, Angela. It means Santa Claus is probably nowhere near here.

ANGELA: What?!

ERIC: This is all my fault. I was eager and careless and because of that I got us all fired.

PHIL: There, there. You can't blame yourself. This is really the station's fault. Obviously you're a huge idiot and they still hired you anyway.

ERIC: Hey!

ANGELA: *(to ERIC)* This is your fault!

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TIM: Hey! Hey! Hey!

*(EVERYONE stops yelling.)*

Now this isn't one person's fault. We all made huge mistakes tonight. Phil, you shouldn't have hypnotized Dave while he was driving.

PHIL: I didn't hypnotize him!

TIM: Angela and Eric, you should have stayed back at the station like I told you. Me, I shouldn't have answered the phone when I saw it was the station was calling me into work, I... Yeah, I guess really it is everyone's fault but mine!

*(EVERYONE starts yelling at each other again. DAVE sneaks cautiously on stage, clucking like a chicken trying to hide from something.)*

DAVE: Bwuck, buck, buck, buck...

*(EVERYONE stops yelling and stares at him.)*

PHIL: Dave?

DAVE: Bwuck?

*(Suddenly a TOW TRUCK DRIVER, acting like a coyote, runs on stage howling. HE begins chasing DAVE around the stage.)*

TOW TRUCK DRIVER: Hooooowwwwwllllllllll

ERIC: What the...

*(The TOW TRUCK DRIVER chases DAVE around in circles. The TWO howling and clucking the entire time.)*

TIM: Dave! Dave!

*(TIM and ERIC chase after DAVE, finally pinning him down. The TOW TRUCK DRIVER growls at them.)*

TIM: Phil, you have to tell Dave he's not a chicken.

PHIL: Why me? I'm busy.

TIM: You're not busy! You're the one who hypnotized him!  
*(The TOW TRUCK DRIVER bites ERIC's foot.)*

ERIC: Down boy, down! Bad!

PHIL: Fine... *(to DAVE)* You're not a chicken.

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DAVE: I'm not? Phew.

*(Enter TOW TRUCK DRIVER #2)*

TOW TRUCK DRIVER #2: *(to TOW TRUCK DRIVER)* And you're not a coyote!

TOW TRUCK DRIVER: Howwwll... Wait, I'm not? Hey, that's great!

TOW TRUCK DRIVER #2: *(to NEWS TEAM)* Sorry about my partner there.

TIM: What the heck is going on?

DAVE: Well, last I remember, Phil hypnotized me while I'm driving, which is a violation of union rules.

PHIL: I did not!

DAVE: And then I ran into this guy who was... Actually, I don't know who you are.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER: Jack Coyote. Tow truck driver. Last thing I remember, I was on a run when my partner here said my last name. I must have been hypnotized by the snow too, cause next thing I know I'm running into the woods. I saw this guy and he looked delicious.

DAVE: Chased after me for miles.

TIM: *(to TOW TRUCK DRIVER #2)* So you hypnotized him by mistake?

TOW TRUCK DRIVER #2: *(shifty, lying)* Um... yes... By mistake.

TIM: *(looks off stage)* What's the live truck doing here?

DAVE: Well, I soon realized that a chicken doesn't have much chance of outrunning a coyote, so I hopped in the truck and sped off.

TIM: You drove hypnotized as a chicken?!

DAVE: *(points to TOW TRUCK DRIVER)* Hey, he drove too!

TOW TRUCK DRIVER: I couldn't catch him on foot! I'm not some sort of super coyote!

TIM: That's unbelievable! *(to ALL)* You know what that means?

ERIC: What?

TIM: Shows on! I'll call master control back at the station! We're doing a live Christmas newscast from Holly Michigan!

DAVE: Not so fast, I may have some trouble with the mast in this wind.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER: Well, I've got some tools in my truck. We could probably help. *(to DAVE)* That is, if you'll let me gnaw on your arm for a bit.

DAVE: No!

TOW TRUCK DRIVER: Come on man, I've been chasing you all night! I'm hungry!

DAVE: You're not a coyote! *(DAVE leans down and starts pecking at the ground, as if HE's eating.)*

TIM: Dave!

DAVE: Sorry, sorry.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER: Fine, I'll help you.

TIM: Great. Angela, Phil, find anyone and everyone you can to interview. Eric, you're forecasting from your cell phone! Tonight, we broadcast the Holly Christmas Extravaganza, live!

### SCENE SIX

***The Village of Holly. News music kicks in. Lights up on ANGELA standing in the middle of town. ERIC is next to her. PHIL is off in the distance. TIM is off to the side, watching.***

ANNOUNCER: (*heard but not seen*) You're watching Channel 8 news at eleven, winner of the Associated Press honorable mention award for best use of natural sound in a newscast. And now, Channel 8 news at eleven.

ANGELA: Good Evening, thank you for joining us on this very special Christmas Eve. I'm Angela Navidad, reporting live tonight from the city that never sleeps, Holly, Michigan. The good people of this town won't let something as simple as a blizzard or concern for public safety stand in the way of an annual holiday celebration. More on that in a moment, first, let's go right to Eric and get the latest on this winter weather. Eric?

ERIC: Thank you Angela and a good Christmas Eve to you. Updated models from Cyclone 8000 show that areas north of here might get up to three feet of snow!

ANGELA: Three feet of snow?! To put that in perspective, Eric, that would be like taking a yard stick, shrinking it down to the size of an inch and multiplying it by 36, would it not?

ERIC: Well, no, I... I mean technically, yeah I guess. Listen, Detroit's already received about 9 inches, the city of Livonia 10, a foot of snow in Clarkston. You can't even see the roads in some areas so watch out.

ANGELA: Probably a good time to panic, am I right Eric?

ERIC: Well, it's never a good time to panic Angela, it...

ANGELA: So nothing really to worry about then? Giving the all clear are you?

ERIC: Well no...

ANGELA: A good time to stock up on food, water and supplies probably.

ERIC: Well, it's kind of too late for that.

ANGELA: So, definitely a time to panic.

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ERIC: No! Everyone will be fine. Just use common sense. Try to stay indoors. We'll have more on the blizzard coming up and as promised at six, we are tracking the every movement of Santa Claus on Cyclone 8000. We'll show you how Jolly Old Saint Nicholas is doing, just ahead.

ANGELA: Alright, looking forward to finding out where both of those guys are Eric. Well, as Eric said a moment ago, probably the worst thing you can do in a blizzard is go outside if you don't have to, but one town isn't listening to the so-called experts. That's right, they're not letting some talking head on television tell them when they can and cannot celebrate the holidays. They don't need some grinchy old meteorologist...

ERIC: Angela!

*(Lights up on PHIL standing with the MAYOR of Holly.)*

ANGELA: Phil Philston is standing by live now with the Mayor of Holly to tell us more about this small town Christmas Extravaganza. Phil.

PHIL: Angela, joining me live is the architect of this whole event, the mayor of Holly, sir can I have your name?

MAYOR: I'd like to remain anonymous if I could.

PHIL: You're the mayor of a town at a Christmas celebration.

MAYOR: I know. I've just always wondered what I'd look like with my face blurred.

PHIL: You'd look blurry.

MAYOR: Fascinating.

PHIL: Tell us, what's going on here this holiday evening.

MAYOR: Why it's only the biggest Christmas celebration in the whole wide world! Almost a quarter mile of sporadically placed holiday decorations. We've got all kinds of fun activities for the Children, like a vegetable eating contest and lots of places where they can sit still and behave.

PHIL: Plus, I hear we're expecting the man in the red suit to be here any minute?

MAYOR: What are you talking about?

PHIL: I'm, of course, talking about Santa Claus.

MAYOR: Well, not the real Santa Claus. A guy in a Santa Claus costume. But that's only between you and I! If anyone comes up to me questioning the authenticity of our Santa Claus, I'm going to know that it came from you.

PHIL: Sir, we're on live television.

MAYOR: Well... I'll deal with me later.



