EUTHANIZING SANTA CLAUS

Ву

Raza Rizvi

OVER BLACK:

DAISY (V.O.)

(little girl)

I thought I was going to put a new phone number one on my list but then I said my number one present is a new art kit like the one Summer has.

FADE IN:

INT. BROCK'S CAR - DAY

Snow gently falls outside, popping off the windows as the car rolls down a suburban street.

Houses and apartments have Christmas decorations of a wide variety - from the overindulgent, to the reasonably festive.

In the backseat sits DAISY (7), bright-eyed, and smiling, staring at the passing houses as she chats up a storm.

DAISY

It has all the markers and really big sheets of paper. Everybody else asked for like phones and iPads and whatever but then I asked for an art kit which is different than everybody else.

Her father, BROCK LEISHMAN (40), balding, freshly shaven face, and dressed in a business suit ready for a day of work.

He nervously chews on his lip, building up courage to say something, getting increasingly irritated at Daisy's youthful diatribe.

DAISY (CONT'D)

So I stand out, right? He will know who I am.

BROCK

Honey--

DAISY

I mean, I still want a new phone. It's on my list as well. But the art kit is number one now. If he has room for it on the sleigh I quess.

(MORE)

DAISY (CONT'D)

I kinda hope he brings me a bike too as well. My old one is too small now.

BROCK

Daisy--

A HEAVILY LIT HOUSE catches her attention.

DAISY

Ooh! Daddy! Do you think we should put more lights up? That way he can find the house better and he might like it if we had more lights and stuff.

BROCK

Daisy, there's something I need to tell you. It's important.

He finally has her attention.

DAISY

What?

Brock takes a breath.

BROCK

Santa Claus isn't real.

Daisy looks at him with amusement.

DAISY

(giggling)

What?

BROCK

He's not real.

She doesn't buy it.

DAISY

Don't be silly, daddy! I saw him at the mall!

BROCK

You saw a guy dressed like Santa at the mall. Like the guys dressed up outside of the store ringing the bells.

DAISY

Duh. I know those people aren't Santa.

Yeah, well--

DAISY

They're Santa's spies!

BROCK

Daisy, listen. I'm sorry to tell you this, but Santa, his elves, his "spies" are all fake. None of them are real.

DAISY

But mall Santa said--

BROCK

You saw a guy dressed as Santa at the mall, and you saw him again at the supermarket... where he was black.

Daisy thinks about this, still unconvinced.

DAISY

Santa's real. He gave me presents last year. And the year before that. And the year before that. He's always there!

BROCK

That was me. Not Santa.

DAISY

(rolling eyes)

You're not Santa, silly!

BROCK

Yes. I am.

She opens her mouth to continues but Brock juts in.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I'm your Santa. Not anybody else's. All your friends' parents pretend to be Santa to them.

Daisy sits a moment, trying to find holes in Brock's argument.

DAISY

You're Santa?

BROCK

Yes, honey.

DATSY

Does mommy know?

BROCK

Mommy was Mrs. Claus... two years ago.

Daisy sits quietly for a long moment. Brock nervously glances at her.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Are you okay, sweetie?

DATSY

I want mommy Santa Claus back.

BROCK

There's no Mister Santa Claus and there's no Mrs. Mommy Santa Claus.

DAISY

Are you sure?

She looks at him, her large, doe-eyes melt Brock's heart, but he's opened this box. There's no backing down.

BROCK

Just think about it, Daisy. Use some common sense. A man... who's like five hundred years old, flies around the entire world... on reindeer, dropping presents to seven billion households, which is probably like on average... twenty billion presents? That were manufactured by elves... which also don't exist by the way, except in limited fantasy worlds in film, television and video games... and nobody has seen him in action. Or the manufacturing company in the North Pole. You would think at least some satellite imagery would pick him up, right?

DAISY

Maybe he's invisible.

BROCK

It's logistically impossible...

DAISY

Lo-gis-tic-all... what?

Think about it. It took us six hours to fly from here to LA, and we didn't have to drop off presents to every single house on the way.

DAISY

Hmmmm.

BROCK

Santa Claus is just a brainwashing, commercial marketing strategy to keep Christmas somewhat interesting so we spend more money on crazy stuff.

DAISY

But I like presents.

BROCK

Buying presents does boost the economy, I'll give you that.

DAISY

What's an economy? Didn't we fly economy to LA?

BROCK

Yes. This is a different economy.

DAISY

Why are there two economies?

BROCK

Because words mean different things.

DAISY

Why do words mean different things?

BROCK

I don't know. Because the people who made up the language were too lazy to put together a different combination of syllables.

DAISY

Interesting.

They sit in silence a moment. Brock is relieved to have gotten it out. Daisy is frowning, thinking about it all.

Anyways. I just thought you should know.

DAISY

That Santa is make-believe.

BROCK

Yeah.

DAISY

Okay.

BROCK

Yeah. Okay.

Brock smiles. That went pretty well.

DAISY

I'm going to tell everybody at school!

BROCK

What? Wait. No. Don't.

DAISY

Why?

BROCK

'Cause I could get in trouble.

DAISY

Why?

BROCK

Because... uh... because it's not our job to tell people the truth.

DAISY

But you said you always tell the truth.

BROCK

About Santa Claus. It's not our job to tell people the truth about Santa Claus.

DAISY

Why?

Because it deals with conforming to cultural values that adults agree on when raising children in this society.

Daisy stares at him.

DAISY

Huh?

BROCK

Just... just don't tell anyone.

DAISY

(shrugging)

Okay.

BROCK

Oh, also, the Tooth-fairy is fake too.

DAISY

Psh! Of course the Tooth-fairy is fake.

BROCK

You don't believe in the Tooth-fairy?

DAISY

I saw you sneak into my room and put money under my pillow.

BROCK

Really? When?

DAISY

Every time.

BROCK

Oh... well. That sucks.

DAISY

So you're the Tooth-fairy and Santa Claus?

BROCK

Yep.

DAISY

And God.

Yeah-- what?

DAISY

If the Tooth-fairy is pretend, and you're the Tooth-fairy, and Santa is pretend, and you're Santa, and God is pretend... does that mean you're God?

BROCK

Uhh...

DATSY

Can I tell everybody that you're God!?

BROCK

Please don't do that.

DAISY

Why?

BROCK

I don't need the pressure.

EXT. SCHOOL - SAME

Brock pulls up at the end of the block from the street.

The line of cars dropping off kids extends all the way back, making it impossible for him to turn in.

INT. BROCK'S CAR - SAME

Brock shakes his head, checking the time in frustration.

BROCK

I should've had you eat in the car. This line is stupid.

DAISY

You can drop me off by the bus stop over there.

Daisy points to the right.

BROCK

No. No. That's across the road. We can wait.

A car HONKS.

DATSY

I'll be careful. I cross this street every day when going to the bus. It's the same.

The car continues honking.

Brock puts his hand up then switches to the right lane.

BROCK

Okay. That makes sense.

Brock goes to the far right lane then stops slightly ahead of the bus stop.

Daisy opens her car door.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Have a good day at school.

DAISY

Bye Santa Claus tooth-fairy God daddy!

Brock laughs and waves.

Daisy closes her door then walks up to a group of kids waiting at the edge of the pavement.

Brock watches from the mirror.

Another car HONKS.

BROCK

Fucking cunt.

Brock puts his hand up again then drives forward slightly.

EXT. STREET CROSSING - SAME

The light turns yellow.

Cars rush to cross.

The walk sign turns white for the crossing kids.

Daisy and a group of SCHOOLCHILDREN step into the street to cross, not noticing--

A speeding SUV, a screaming HORN!

CLOSE ON: DAISY'S EYES TURNING.

Too late.

The SUV slamming to a stop, a SCREECH of tires on pavement, SHOUTS and SCREAMS and--

Daisy's legs alone seen, the rest of her body under the Ford F150. No movement.

A blur of chaotic voices and screams meld into the sound of an audience laughing and applauding.

Brock's VOICE comes through on an microphone over the laughter. A WOLF-WHISTLE over the applause.

WHITEOUT.

BROCK (V.O.)

(into mic)

Thank you, sir. I know, I know. You're looking at this and thinking, "Damn, someone's redefined 'sexy', and you are correct." So... uhh... I'm forty three now. That's pretty old. I'm single. No kids. Balding... But hey, at least I'm not fat.

Some chuckles from an audience.

SUPER: 4 YEARS LATER

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

Brock, a little older and far more worn. His shirt is rumpled and his remaining hair a bit tussled.

He stands on a small stage in a back-room comedy club.

A good sized crowd enjoys the night out. He paces around as the light shines on him performing his stand-up routine.

The audience receives him relatively well. No home-run by any stretch, but not a flop.

BROCK

I gotta hold on reeeaaaal tight to that last one. I'm four out of five on that checklist. Y'know, 'cause over forty, single, no kids, balding AND fat... I'd have to kill myself.

Some laughter. A couple of amused groans.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I think it goes the other way too though. Young, married with kids, a full head of gorgeous hair and a body like cross-fit Ben Affleck Batman? Yeah, you have to kill yourself then too. Just out of politeness.

Laughs.

BROCK (CONT'D)

(to a woman up front)
Too real for you, ma'am.

She waves him off, hiding her face.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Miss? Ma'am? Which one is it? See. I never know. I think it's always miss, even if it's someone's great-grandmother and she's laying in a casket.

He leans over an invisible casket and dead woman.

BROCK (CONT'D)

(whispering)

You look amazing, miss.

Laughs.

BROCK (CONT'D)

See. I'm a truth teller. I like to shoot straight. I've tasted my foot so much, I buy socks once a week to avoid that sweaty toe taste... Anyone wanna kiss?

Laughter.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Forty three. Single. Bald. I mean seriously. That's the point where you're literally no use sexually to anybody.

Brock pantomimes blowing his brains out. Some scattered chuckles.

BROCK (CONT'D)

(losing steam)

Funny thing suicide... funny, funny thing.

Uncomfortable laughter. Not a welcomed dark turn.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Everybody has thought about killing themselves. Obviously there are different levels to those thoughts. Like tee-ball is seeing a shitty picture of yourself on a friend's Instagram and you're like "Ugh! OMG! I should totally like kill myself". Minor leagues is like "If I don't stop crying over this, I might have to see how many sleeping pills I can swallow in one gulp of Jack... and the Majors is "Your background check went through, sir. Here's your shotgun. Would you like a box of shells with that?"

Brock shrugs.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I'm happy I'm an atheist. It's probably one of the few things that has kept me alive... until now. You know, suicide is a sin, right? Right there in the Bible. "Hey don't kill yourself". But I'm betting that's in there because people were just killing themselves all over the place back in the day.

Pantomiming holding a staff.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Just a bunch of goat herders standing around.

(one voice)

"Hey, Bill. How's it going?"

(another voice)

"How's it going? There's no internet, TV, movies, sports, or porn."

(first voice)

Plus you're fat.

Brock pantomimes shooting himself in the head. Laughter.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I mean can you blame them? Shit, you die, there's a fucking paradise where you get to do whatever the fuck you want whenever you want to... with JESUS. And you just know that guy always has wine on him. Plus, it's not like it lasts for three hours, or even three years, Naw, it's forever! Eternity! Until the end of time! What the fuck am I doing here? When I could just --POW! And go over there... I don't know. Something was up back then. While they were trekking that shitty desert in their shitty shoes, there were probably just people killing themselves left and right. Next thing you know, there's two disciples left in the group. They turn to each other, they both know they're thinking the same thing.

(one voice)

"We should figure out how to put a kibosh on this suicide thing."

(second voice)

"We should make it a sin, right?" Bam. Goes in the book. God sayeth thou shan't off thyself... or however the fuck he speaks.

(shrugs)

Well, that's my time. You've been an audience and I've been Brock Leishman.

Brock paces the mic back on the stand and waves to a generous audience applause as he walks off the stage.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - BAR - NIGHT

Brock sits alone at the bar drinking water.

A few seconds later, MARTY, a fat, bald man in his late forties takes a seat next to him with a big grin on his face, maybe a little drunk.

MICKEY

Hey.

Brock looks over, recognizing him with a nod.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Saw you out there tonight. Dark shit. Loved it.

BROCK

Thanks.

MICKEY

Can I get you a drink?

BROCK

I don't drink.

MTCKEY

You sound like someone who does... With that material.

BROCK

Just water for me.

MICKEY

Bartender!

A YOUNG BARTENDER turns around.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

A beer for me. Make it a surprise.

The Bartender nods and gets to work.

Mickey turns back to Brock.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Name's Mickey by the way.

BROCK

Nice to meet you.

Mickey nudges Brock and grins.

MICKEY

I should kill myself.

BROCK

Huh?

MICKEY

Fat, old, bald, single, childless lazy ass. I should kill myself

according to you.

BROCK

Maybe you should.

Brock stands up and starts to walk off.

MICKEY

You're good man! Good!

Mickey laughs it off as Brock exits the club.

INT. BROCK'S CAR - NIGHT

Away from the city, the glow of it in the horizon through the back window, Brock drives down a country road lined with dark trees.

Through the black, something in the distance is illuminated by the headlights.

A deer.

Brock slows to a halt. The deer stares at Brock.

Brock motions for it to move.

BROCK

C'mon fucker.

After several seconds of staring, the deer moves on and Brock continues to drive.

EXT. BROCK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A moderately sized house, but incredibly isolated.

Brock parks and exits his car.

INT. BROCK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

He turns on the light as he enters the front door. The nearly empty house is lined with moving boxes stacked against the wall.

INT. BROCK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brock crashes on a mattress resting on the floor.

He holds his phone out and unlocks it, scrolls through DOZENS OF IMAGES of his old life.

He stops on a video, presses play, and watches.

ON SCREEN: Daisy (age 6) walks up around in ADULT SHOES too big for her.

Brock looks at her, silent.

ON SCREEN: She says something, but there's no audio, or at least we don't hear it. Daisy dances around and stumbles. She lands on her rear and laughs joyously. Brock scrolls back and plays the moment again. She lands and laughs. Then again...

Brock touches the screen and his daughter's face. He clicks the phone screen off and stares at the ceiling.

Where there's a small crack in the plaster, a tiny spider scurries along the rack and disappears into it.

EXT. BROCK'S HOUSE - DAY

A dreary day. Clouds hang thick, wanting to rain or snow, but only drag by.

Brock places two boxes into the back of a moving truck.

A TEAM OF THREE MOVERS trudge back and forth from the house carrying boxes and rolling the larger items on dollies.

Brock steps back and looks out at the open field adjacent to his house. He turns to look down the road and spots a woman walking up from the street.

MARY (50s), Brock's Realtor and neighbor, waves to him with the well-practiced smile befitting her career.

She is perpetually cheerful, providing a stark contrast to Brock.

MARY

(smiling)

Brock! Hey! Big day. How are you feeling?

The two meet halfway. Brock holds up a set of keys.

BROCK

Hey, Mary. I'm good. Last of the stuff is nearly out. Here are the keys.

She takes them and smiles up at the house.

MARY

The Martins are on the road and are all set to move in Friday. They're just thrilled.

BROCK

Good, good.

(beat)

I, uh, had some packages coming but I didn't know what address to use. Is it okay that I put your place?

MARY

Oh, of course. I'll tell Ed to keep an eye out for them.

BROCK

Thanks.

MARY

Ready to say goodbye to the old place, huh?

BROCK

Yep.

MARY

You picked a perfect time to sell. I know I keep saying that, but you did.

BROCK

You do keep saying that.

MARY

Well it's true! And you didn't need this big place all to yourself. Probably felt like a mausoleum.

BROCK

Yeah, well...

MARY

We'll miss having you around. I never say this to any of my other clients... but you should come by for dinner sometime, okay?

BROCK

Me?

MARY

Yeah, you.

Alright. Well... I might have to take you up on that offer.

MARY

Where are you headed by the way?

BROCK

Apartment downtown. Thought it was time for a chance. Ya know with the work and all.

MARY

That comedy career must be really kicking off if you're moving into the city.

Brock shrugs.

BROCK

Not quite yet. Still getting there. But, you know, closer to the clubs, less driving, less gas, less money spent. It all evens out but I'm happier.

MARY

That's good... Well... if you ever need anything just call me up, okay?

BROCK

Yeah. Of course.

MARY

I'll text you when those packages come in. Oh, and I'll email you the last of the paperwork.

BROCK

Great. Thank you.

Mary looks at him with a smile - a softness behind her eyes.

MARY

Okay. I'll leave you to it.

She waves as Brock heads towards the house.

INT. BROCK'S CAR - DAY

Brock drives down the empty country road. Boxes pile up in the back seat... something draws his attention up ahead.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE ROAD - DAY

A dead deer lies in the middle of the road.

Brock slows down to a stop besides it.

He look down at the dead deer, its eyes black and hallow.

He stares straight into them... then slowly pulls away, continuing towards the city.

INT. BROCK'S APARTMENT - DAY

A small, one bedroom place. His boxes and furniture are stacked neatly in the center of the living room and kitchen.

He SIGNS a document and hands it to the MOVER.

BROCK

Thanks.

MOVER

No problem.

The Mover leaves.

Brock stares at all his stuff. Not much of it.

He pockets his hands and sighs.

INT. BROCK'S CAR - DAY

The sun struggles to push through the wintry clouds. Brock drives down a neighborhood street,.

Many of the houses have multi-colored lights dangling from rain gutters and wrapped around the bushes.

Some have miniature reindeer and sleighs or even a large inflatable Frosty the Snowman.

It's that time of year again.

He taps his finger rapidly on the steering wheel as he slows to a red-light.

On his left, a BELL-RINGER SANTA jangles his bell and waves. Brock ignores him.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Brock, rolling a cart, walks down the aisles... containing a variety of food from cereal boxes to shower curtains.

He turns into an aisle and nearly bumps into another customer.

BROCK

Sorry.

CUSTOMER

It's fine.

To avoid the woman, he turns down another aisle, exhaling - irritated.

It's the CHRISTMAS DECORATION AISLE.

He begrudgingly walks down it, hardly looking at the shelves.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - LATER

The CASHIER pleasantly scans Brock's items. The last thing he sets on the conveyer belt is SMALL TREE - just a two footer, with tiny lights and mini decorations already on it.

After scanning the last item, Brock pulls out his wallet as--

CASHIER

(re: the tree)

Cute.

BROCK

Yeah, nothing fancy.

CASHIER

One seventy-nine, forty-two.

Brock swipes his card.

The Cashier and Brock share a smile.

CASHIER (CONT'D)

Hopefully the family likes it.

Brock nods.

BROCK

She will.

INT. BROCK'S APARTMENT - DAY

MONTAGE - BROCK SETTING UP HIS PLACE:

- -- Placing the couch and TV
- -- Making his bed
- -- Hanging the new curtain on the shower
- -- Putting the tree on a small table by the window
- -- He hangs a string of lights around the window
- -- OUTSIDE BROCK'S FRONT DOOR Brock sticks a HOLLY on the door and closes it.
- -- Brock hangs a stocking with the letter B on a shelf, FRAMED PICTURES sitting on it.
- -- Brock hangs a stocking besides it with the letter D.
- -- And hangs the final stocking. The letter J.
- -- Brock tapes a picture of Daisy on the stocking with the letter D.
- -- Brock tapes a picture of JENNA, his ex-wife to the stocking with the letter J.

END MONTAGE.

It's night.

Brock looks around his place and the decorations, standing with the power outlet of the Christmas lights in his hands.

He plugs it in.

Nothing turns on.

Brock looks around confused. He kneels down to the power outlet on the wall.

He unplugs the light, then plugs it back in.

The lights illuminate in a vibrant white, red, and green.

A slight smile sweeps over Brock's face.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brock lies down, watching a video on his phone.

ON SCREEN: A home video of Daisy; she wears a hat way too large for her, covering virtually her entire face. She giggles continuously. In the video, Brock takes the off her face. Daisy playfully screams and reaches out for the hat. She grabs it and puts it back on her undersized head, starting to giggle again.

The video ends. Brock closes his phone and rests it to the side, shutting his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

BROCK'S PHONE ALARM GOES OFF.

His eyes flutter open to the bright sunshine spilling in through the window.

He reaches over for his phone and turns off the alarm.

Then looks at his notification screen... staring at it.

A calendar reminder reads:

TODAY IS THE DAY YOU KILLED DAISY.

BROCK (V.O.)

Imagine how long the line is for heaven. You think the DMV is bad...

Brock stares at his phone... the reminder.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

Scattered laughter as Brock is up doing another routine, this one receiving a pretty similar response to his previous one.

Not great, but not terrible.

BROCK

You know how many people die in a day and must be lined up waiting to get in?

(to an audience member)
You don't need to answer. It was rhetorical. I did the research.

Laughter.

BROCK (CONT'D)

It's two people a second, one hundred and five a minute, six thousand three hundred and sixteen an hour, and one hundred fifty-one thousand, six hundred people hit the eternal snooze button a day... So, you know, just a shade under the DMV line.

Brock paces the stage a bit. He's feeling comfortable.

BROCK (CONT'D)

You know the whole shpeel right?
You wait in that looooong line probably behind someone who smells
like B.O. That's standard long line
rules. And when you get to the
front, you get judged, right? You
can bet that's not a quick beat.

Pantomiming opening a HUGE book.

BROCK (CONT'D)

(in a voice)

Okay, Mr. Leishman. Let's see what we got here... Mm-Hmm... Yeah... Yeah...

(normal voice)

Can we speed this up. I've had to pee for, like, 200 years.

(ignoring himself)

"Sorry, this is standard. Gotta check everything."

(normal voice)

You can skip my teens. I just spent a lot of time with my Mom's Victoria Secrets catalog.

His "St. Peter" character considers that, and he pantomime's skipping a BUNCH of pages. Stops to check. Skips more pages.

The audience laughs at the bit.

BROCK (CONT'D)

How long should that take? Right? I mean, no one is that interesting. Just instant replay that shit.

(MORE)

BROCK (CONT'D)

If it takes on average five minutes a person, then that means in the time it takes one person to be judged, five hundred and twenty five more people would be in line...

He pantomimes being in line and looking back.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ, this is gonna take an eternity!

Laughs.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Oh, I think I actually see Jesus over there. He's not even in yet! Hey! J.C.! How about you get your dad to speed this shit up! (looking to St. Peter) Hey, don't write that down. That was afterlife stuff. That doesn't

He paves a bit.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I bet waiting in that line stewing in all your guilt and mistakes. Just wondering what's going to be in that book.

(St. Peter voice)

Okay, Mr--

count!

(shouting)

I stole a LEGO guy from Walmart when I was eight and got away with it and I felt so bad I swallowed it, and when I pooped it out, I clogged the toilet and I blamed it on using too much toilet paper! Huff-huff-huff...

A beat. His St. Peter taps an invisible pen on his tongue and writes--

BROCK (CONT'D)

(St. Peter voice)

I'll put you down for "Hell".

Laughter.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Thanks. That's my time.

Applause.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - BACKSTAGE - LATER

Brock walks back stage looking at his PHONE. The club manager walks to him. This is JERRY (early 40's), laid back and cool. A lifelong comedian.

BROCK

Hey, Jerry.

JERRY

Nice set. All that new?

BROCK

Yeah. What'd you think?

JERRY

(shrugging)

I liked it. Fucking depressing shit about death. Your standard stuff.

BROCK

Yeah.

JERRY

You want a set tomorrow? We got a couple of openings.

BROCK

Maybe.

JERRY

You going to stick around? Couple newbies going up. Should be interesting.

BROCK

Na, I gotta go.

JERRY

Got a date?

BROCK

With the devil.

JERRY

Bet his line moves a helluva lot faster.

BROCK

(smirking)

I might use that.

Jerry gives Brock a slap on the shoulder and walks off.

INT. BROCK'S CAR - NIGHT

Brock drives down the familiar deserted road, dense foliage on either side.

He squints ahead, spotting something.

BROCK

Are you fucking serious.

Another DEAD DEER lies, broken and bloodied in the middle of the road.

Brock's car stops in front of it.

Brock stares at the dead deer.

BROCK (CONT'D)

What are you trying to symbolize!?

Brock slams on the gas as he drives over the deer with a significant BUMP.

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Next door to Brock's countryside house, he walks up to the front door.

An automatic light turns on as he KNOCKS.

After a few seconds, the door opens. It's Mary.

MARY

Brock!

BROCK

Hey, Mary. Got your text.

MARY

Oh, yes, yes!

ED (O.S.)

Who is it?

MARY

It's Brock, Ed!

ED (0.S.)

Hey, Brock!

Brock bites his lip a touch anxious.

BROCK

You have the packages?

MARY

Yes, yes. Come in.

BROCK

Oh, no. I don't want to bother. I just wanted to grab them real quick and--

MARY

(cheerfully)

I insist!

This isn't a hill Brock will die on. He nods his head and walks in as ED, a jovial, balding man Mary's age appears.

ED

Brock, back so soon. Miss us?

BROCK

Hey, Ed.

ED

Have you eaten yet? We were just about to sit down.

BROCK

It's okay, I was--

ED

Mary cooked up a mean meatloaf. I'll eat it all if you don't join us.

BROCK

That's really nice, but--

MARY

Yes, please. Tonight I'm just your neighbor, not your Realtor. Come. Come. We have too much to eat ourselves. Oh, isn't this wonderful!

Brock forces a smile as Mary and Ed pull him into the dining room.

INT. BROCK'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Brock walks into the complex carrying the boxes.

He strolls across the lobby passing an elderly security guard who is far too old to be guarding anyplace, DAMIEN, who looks at Brock and does a double take.

DAMIEN

Brock Taylor?

Brock shuts his eyes and stops in his tracks. He looks over at the Doorman.

BROCK

Yes.

DAMIEN

I thought it was you.

The old man hobbles over to Brock smiling.

BROCK

Sorry, do I know you?

DAMIEN

(chuckling)

You don't remember me? It's Damian, man! I remember you from like... twelve years ago.

BROCK

Damian?

DAMIEN

Yeah, man!

BROCK

(it clicks)

Oh! Yeah! Jeez, I didn't recognize you. You look like shit.

DAMIEN

That's life for ya. Ya get wrinkled and gray. Looks like you've headed that way as well.

BROCK

Yeah, well, life, right?

DAMIEN

I didn't know you were back here. Well, I saw the name Brock Taylor on the roster. Thought it was some weird coincidence.

BROCK

Nah, I'm back. Where it all started.

DOORMAN

Well... things are pretty much the same. It smells a lot more foreign. All that Indian and Asian cooking.

BROCK

It's not a bother.

DAMIEN

Is Jenna here too?

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

Ah... no. We, um, got divorced.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. (a beat)

Mind if I call her?

Damien laughs at his joke. Brock forces a smile.

BROCK

Well, I have some stuff to get to...

DAMIEN

Oh, sure. Sure. Get to it. It's great to have you back, man. We'll catch up later.

BROCK

Yep.

Brock and Damien stare at each other for a long beat, before Brock turns and walks off.

INT. BROCK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brock walks into his apartment. He takes a deep, relieving breath as he puts the boxes on the floor.

He sits down and cuts off the tape on one of the boxes. shuffles through the packaging and pulls out a--

SANTA CLAUS COSTUME - beard, boots, hat. The whole shebang.

He holds it out, staring at it. After a moment, he rises and puts on the outfit.

He walks over to the window, the lights glowing near it making it reflect easily. He looks at himself in the costume.

He returns to the boxes and opens the second one, removing a ROPE. He untangles it and whips it around, checking its strength and durability.

Brock starts singing as he walks to his couch.

BROCK

You better watch out You better not cry Better not pout I'm telling you why Santa Claus is coming to town!

Brock drags a chair to underneath the ceiling fan as he continues singing:

BROCK (CONT'D)

(tying rope like a noose)
He's making a list
And checking it twice
Gonna find out
Who's naughty and nice
Santa Claus is coming to town!

Brock picks up his wallet and takes out a picture of HIS FAMILY.

A very young Daisy, held in Brock's arms as he stands besides his wife, Jenna.

BROCK (CONT'D)

(walking to tree)

He sees you when you're sleeping

He knows when you're awake

He knows if you've been bad or good

So be good for goodness sake!

Brock wedges the picture between the branches of the tree. He looks back at the dangling noose, making sure the picture faces it perfectly.

BROCK (CONT'D)

BROCK (CONT'D)

You better not cry
Better not pout
I'm telling you why

Brock puts the noose around his neck and closes his eyes.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Santa Claus is coming to town! Santa Claus is coming to town!

Brock is about to kick the chair out from under him but then--

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

From the front door.

Brock freezes.

He takes a deep breath.

BROCK (CONT'D)

WHO IS IT?

No response.

Brock rolls his eyes, then takes the noose of his neck.

He jumps to the floor and walks to the front door.

He looks through the peephole... for a while.

Confused, Brock opens the door and peers out.

There's nobody there.

He looks left and right down the hallway.

Nobody.

Brock closes the door and walks back to his noose.

He steps on the chair, ties the noose around his neck.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Santa Claus is coming to town! Santa Claus is coming to town!

Just in the nick of time--

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

BROCK (CONT'D)

GOD FUCKING DAMMIT!

Brock furiously steps down the chair and storms to the front door.

Without hesitation Brock opens the door.

He jumps back--

For just a second we see two brief figures. A little girl and woman, although it's not clear, we know it's Daisy and Jenna.

But Brock immediately shuts the door on them.

He starts breathing heavily as he rushes back to his noose.

He stands on the chair, ties the rope around his neck and again.

And kicks out the chair.

Brock starts dangling in the air. Legs kicking.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Brock starts losing oxygen.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Brock's legs kick with more ferocity.

The ceiling fan starts to lose its structure.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

CREAK.

The ceiling fan is about to give out.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

CRASH!

The ceiling fan loses its base as it comes crashing down with Brock to the floor.

Brock starts breathing heavily, regaining his lost breath.

The KNOCKING continues, in series of THREE.

Brock shrugs the ceiling fan off of him as he starts crawling towards the front door, grunting in agony.

He finally reaches the foot of the door. He stretches his arm up and pulls down the handle, swinging the door open.

He looks up at TWO COLLEGE GIRLS, holding out a plate of cookies.

They look down at Brock, but continue to smile.

COLLEGE GIRL #1

How ya doing down there, Santa?

The other Girl laughs.

BROCK

What do you want? I'm a bit busy here.

The Girls look out into the apartment and see the broken and shattered ceiling fan.

COLLEGE GIRL #2

We got you cookies! They're peanut butter!

Brock stares at College Girl #2 inquisitively.

The Girl kneels down and holds the plate out in front of Brock, who grabs it.

COLLEGE GIRL #1

Welcome to the complex!

COLLEGE GIRL #2

See you around, Santa!

COLLEGE GIRL #1

HO! HO! HO!

College Girl #2 laughs.

They turn and walk down the hallway as Brock slams the door shut.

He crawls over, past the ceiling fan, to the open living room space, leaning against the couch.

He digs his fingers into the plastic wrap, tearing it open.

He picks up one of the cookies and holds it out in front of his face, inspecting it.

His stomach RUMBLES.

Brock groans.

Brock smells the cookie, then digs in. Taking a large bite.

He chews, and chews and chews. Crunch. Crunch. Crunch.

He takes another large bite, finishing the first cookie.

Brock grabs another cookie. He devours. Then grabs another, and another.

He groans orgasmically at the deliciousness of the cookie.

INT. BROCK'S APARTMENT - LATER

Still in his costume, Brock is crashed on the floor, limbs outstretched, an empty plate next to his head.

His stomach rises and falls as he breathes in and out, with the occasional snore.

It's relatively serene... Quiet... which is broken by an unnerving

CREEEEEAAAKK.

It's hard to place where it's coming from.

Brock remains asleep, enjoying his slumber.

On the wall behind him, a brief glimpse of a SHADOW passes over, an inhuman shape.

The shadow stops, the features clearer. Several limbs can be made out, but it's the size of a human. Some sort of human, arachnid hybrid, but it still remains unseen.

The shadow as hovers over the Brock. One of the limbs reach out close to Brock's ear and TAP TAPS on the floor dramatically.

Brock groans but doesn't wake. He adjusts his sleeping position.

TAP. TAP. TAP. The CREATURE tries again to wake him softly. But Brock doesn't budge.

A low GRUNT comes from the Creature as it TAP TAPS louder. Brock sleeps on, a truly deep sleeper.

Finally, the Creature gives up and POUNDS all eight of its limbs on the ground with a massive BOOM!

The ceiling and ground both shake. But Brock remains rather steady as his eyes flutter open. He rubs them, but then, realizing what's in front of him, stops...

We see the creature for the first time.

It is a human sized spider-thing. Minus the red, demonic eyes, the Creature isn't all that scary.

It's furry, and one may even consider it cute. But the fiery red eyes from hell stare, unwavering, piercing the soul.

Brock takes a second to absorb him before--

BROCK

AH!

Brock scurries backwards to the wall.

CREATURE

(demonic voice)

Hello, Brock.

BROCK

What the... fucking... FUCK!

Brock pulls down his Santa beard and starts slapping his cheeks.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Wake up. Wake up.

CREATURE

This is reality. On Earth. The tangible essence of what can be perceived as mortal life.

Brock groans.

BROCK

I'm dreaming. This is a dream. The cookies were laced with something. What are college kids into these days? Molly? Am I on Molly?

Brock tries steadying himself, taking deep breath.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Alright... lucid dream mode initiated.

Brock takes a few more deep breaths and shuts his eyes.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I am going to fly out the window...

I am going to fly out the window.

Brock reaches out his arms and flaps with a:

BROCK (CONT'D)

Caw!

But nothing happens.

CREATURE

We have much to discuss.

The Creature leans into Brock getting close. It exhales and Brock's hair moves from the wind.

BROCK

Holy shit... This is real.

CREATURE

Yes, Brock.

Brock freezes for a beat... then bursts out laughing.

BROCK

Yes! Take me!

Brock surrenders himself to the Creature.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Take me, please!

Brock shuts his eyes... and pauses.

The Creature continues to hover over him.

Brock's eyes snap open.

BROCK (CONT'D)

What?

CREATURE

I'm not here to kill you.

BROCK

But... Why?

CREATURE

Because you're not ready yet. I'm here to educate you. To teach you.

BROCK

Fuck off. Why me?

CREATURE

He's taken a liking to you. I suppose he likes your jokes. He's been watching you.

He?

CREATURE

Yes.

Brock rubs his eyes.

BROCK

He who?

CREATURE

(remembering)

Ah, yes. You are an atheist.

Brock takes a deep breath.

BROCK

Which He?

CREATURE

What do you mean?

BROCK

For fuck's sake. God or Lucifer?

The Creature laughs.

CREATURE

That doesn't matter.

BROCK

Um, yeah it matters. It would affect your motivation.

CREATURE

Look, I'm here to help.

BROCK

So God sent you?

The creature smiles. Brock waits. The creature turns away getting down to business.

CREATURE

Let's get to the problem at hand. We have a lot to cover, and I don't like to dilly-dally.

BROCK

(muttering)

The spider monster just said dilly dally.

(directly)

(MORE)

BROCK (CONT'D)

I just want to die, okay? And this is probably just some fever dream hallucination bullshit going on from my lack of oxygen or whatever.

CREATURE

Your wife and daughter are dead.

BROCK

(dryly)

Thanks.

CREATURE

And you think killing yourself will rid you of the pain.

BROCK

Yes. Now get out of my apartment and let me kill myself please.

CREATURE

This used to be your apartment. You and your wife lived here together.

BROCK

You really don't have to tell me things I already know. I get it.

CREATURE

A very symbolic way to commit suicide, don't you say?

BROCK

That was kind of the point. I spent a lot of time setting this all up.

CREATURE

And the best you could come up with was hanging yourself from a ceiling fan from a rope you bought online?

BROCK

It had five stars reviews and was seventy-five percent cheaper than at the store.

CREATURE

I also find all of these Christmas decorations ironic. Why the tiny tree? Didn't want to spring for the full spruce?

BROCK

I don't give a shit what you think.

CREATURE

Killing yourself won't rid you of your guilt.

BROCK

Of course it will. I'll be dead. Dead equals nothing. I won't feel guilt when I'm dead. It's a perfectly logical conclusion to reach.

CREATURE

You'll be feeling the guilt in the afterlife. For eternity. That long wait in that long line, right?

BROCK

(exasperated)

Ugh!

CREATURE

I don't like your attitude Brock.

BROCK

Just tell God or whoever to let me die and become space dust. I don't need this afterlife bullshit.

CREATURE

Your wife and daughter are there. Together.

Brock's freezes. He stares for a beat.

BROCK

What?

CREATURE

They're waiting patiently for you.

Brock eyes the Creature.

BROCK

Prove it.

The Creature hesitates.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Typical.

Brock lies back down and closes his eyes.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I'm just going to pretend like this conversation didn't happen, then go about my business, okay?

CREATURE

I'll be back.

BROCK

Yeah, see ya later, Schwarzenegger.

The Creature grunts as it dissipates into thin air.

Brock opens one eye to see if he's truly alone. He exhales deeply and closes his eyes tight.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Brock's eyes snap open. He's lying in bed. He jolts upright and frantically feels his surroundings.

He's still dressed in his Santa Claus costume.

BROCK

Jesus Christ.

He scrambles out off bed and to the--

TITVING ROOM.

It's exactly how it was the previous night. The broken ceiling fan collects debris on the floor.

The crumb-filled plate of cookies rests on the floor as well. Brock walks over to it.

Inspecting it. He drags his finger across the residue then licks it off.

INT. BROCK'S CAR - DAY

Brock, now wearing a hoodie, speeds down a road. A CHRISTMAS TUNE blasts from the speakers.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Brock parks in a space outside a Catholic Church.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Brock steps into the church, his footsteps echoing loudly. The place is decorated beautifully, garland and glowing lights. The Advent Wreath aglow.

Seated in a pew writing in a notebook, FATHER PEDRO (30's), a kind-faced priest looks back at Brock.

FATHER PEDRO

Hello there. Can I help you?

BROCK

Um... maybe?

Brock looks around nervously. Pedro stands and strolls over to him.

FATHER PEDRO

What's troubling you?

BROCK

(laughing humorlessly)

A plethora of things.

(looking around)

Do I... Don't I dip'my hand in water or something?

Pedro smiles kindly.

FATHER PEDRO

So this is your first time at a church?

BROCK

Uh, yeah.

FATHER PEDRO

What led you here?

BROCK

I can't really get into details.

FATHER PEDRO

I'm here to help. If you just want to talk, I'll listen.

Brock looks around uncomfortable. He is very out of his element.

BROCK

This is weird. You're a literal stranger.

FATHER PEDRO

You can put your trust in me. My name is Father Pedro.

BROCK

Heh. Pedro. That's Peter, right?

FATHER PEDRO

Yes, after St. Peter.

BROCK

Phew. I've had some laughs at your namesake's expense.

FATHER PEDRO

(smiling)

Yeah, there are a fair amount of St. Peter jokes. I've heard them all. What's you name?

BROCK

Brock.

FATHER PEDRO

Well, Brock, I have experience listening to people. This is my job. Remember that. Think of me as a therapist.

Pedro smiles so kindly. Brock feels bad. He takes a breath and just lets it out.

BROCK

I saw a demon.

Father Pedro stares blankly at Brock for several long seconds.

FATHER PEDRO

A demon?

BROCK

Yep.

FATHER PEDRO

Like, in a dream?

BROCK

In my living room.

Pedro tightens his lips to maintain his professional decorum, not quite sure what to make of this.

FATHER PEDRO

And what did this demon want?

BROCK

He wanted to... hang out? I think?

Pedro tightens his lips again, this time holding back a grin. He clears his throat.

FATHER PEDRO

You saw a demon. And he wanted to hangout?

BROCK

After I tried to hang myself from my ceiling fan.

FATHER PEDRO

Oh.

BROCK

(blurting)

I know that's bad, but I had this stupid idea that if I ended it all, I wouldn't have to deal with everything anymore, and I'd just stop existing!

FATHER PEDRO

(carefully)

You would have the afterlife to suffer the consequences of that action.

BROCK

I don't believe in that! I just - I just wanted to die, so I made all these plans, and then the fan fell, and these two girls showed up with cookies, and then the demon came and told me God or the Devil likes my jokes, and - and I woke up and came here! And I just miss my little girl and my wife so much, and I just wanted it to end!

Brock sits there breathing heavily. Father Pedro's eyebrows are lifted. They sit there a moment, until--

FATHER PEDRO

And the best you could come up with was hanging yourself from a ceiling fan from a rope?

Brock clenches his jaw and looks up at Father Pedro.

SMASH CUT:

INT. BROCK'S CAR - DAY

Brock speeds white knuckled down the road.

INT. EVENT CENTER - CHURCH OF SATAN - DAY

Brock enters a gathering. There is a sign by the door reading: CHURCH OF SATAN WEEKLY SERVICE.

He stands out like a sore thumb with his casual dressing style, but walks through an elaborately decorated event center.

Various satanic symbols and anti-Christ crosses pepper the walls. A giant statue of Lucifer rests on an elevated stage.

A female SATANIST walks up behind the dazed Brock. She looks entirely normal in a pants suit and a Styrofoam cup of coffee in hand.

SATANIST

May I be of service, sir?

BROCK

Is there anybody I can talk to, for advice?

SATANIST

Are you a believer in our Lord Lucifer?

BROCK

Possibly. I had an experience.

SATANIST

Really?

Brock looks around at the room. A low HUM reverberates from the stage as GROUP OF SATANISTS begin a RITUAL.

BROCK

Okay... this may have been a bad idea.

SATANIST

No... join us.

I just want someone to talk to.

SATANIST

You can talk to us.

The Satanist inches uncomfortably closer to Brock. Brock stands like a statue.

SATANIST (CONT'D)

Tell me about your demon.

BROCK

Um...

The Satanist sticks out her tongue and licks Brock's face.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Thank you for your time. This isn't exactly what I was looking for.

SATANIST

You are welcome anytime.

BROCK

Thanks.

The Satanist pulls out a flier from her robe.

SATANIST

Here are all the times and locations we meet.

Brock politely takes the flier and nods.

INT. BROCK'S CAR - DAY

Brock drives. The car is deadly silent. The city seems quieter than usual... He slows at the red light.

He looks out his window and spots something.

A sign for THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

Brock stares at it long and hard.

BROCK

Ehhh. Na.

The light turns green and Brock drives off.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Brock stands in front of a shelf of TOASTERS.

He stares, examining them carefully.

A WORKER walks up to him.

WORKER

Need any help, sir?

BROCK

Which one of these has the most wattage?

INT. BROCK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Brock slams the unopened toaster box on the counter. He struggles mightily until it comes out.

He slams it on the kitchen counter, plugs it in, and puts two slices of bread in it.

The toast pops up. Brock grabs the toasts, slobbers peanut butter all over it, and plops on the couch with the plate in his lap.

He looks at the pictures of his family wedged in the Christmas tree.

He stares long and hard at the picture of his wife.

Then takes a bite of his toast with a loud

CRUNCH--

CUT TO:

INT. BROCK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Brock and RAVEN, a black woman in her early thirties, have loud, sex. Brock finishes with one final thrust, then turns over on his back as they both breathe heavily, recovering.

Raven swings out of bed and walks to the bathroom.

BROCK

You hungry?

RAVEN (O.S.)

We just ate.

We just burned a lot of calories.

RAVEN (O.S.)

I could use a sandwich.

BROCK

Ah, yes.

Brock stands and pulls on boxers. He walks into the

KITCHEN

And opens the pantry door. He takes out a loaf of bread and a half eaten jar of peanut butter.

Brock licks his lips as Raven walks out.

RAVEN

You're really obsessed with that peanut butter.

BROCK

You know Jenna's allergy. I never get to have it. Can't even have it in the house. A whiff of it and her throat tightens up.

RAVEN

Seriously?

Brock smears the bread with peanut butter.

BROCK

Yep. Don't want to waste any.

Brock adds even more peanut butter before folding the bread into a sandwich and handing it to Raven.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Here ya go.

Brock gets to work on another overloaded peanut butter sandwich as Raven takes a massive bite.

RAVEN

Mmmmm. Crunchy. My favorite.

BROCK

(sighing)

Oh, I love you.

Raven laughs.

Brock walks to her. They smile at one another sensually.

BROCK (CONT'D)

You have something on your teeth.

RAVEN

Oh really?

They share a passionate kiss.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

You ready to go again?

BROCK

Fifteen more minutes.

RAVEN

Not one minute more or one minute less.

BROCK

You can always trust my refractory period.

Raven chuckles then grabs Brock and drags him back into the bedroom, leaving the kitchen with the open jar of peanut butter.

The door to the bedroom SLAMS shut.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX HALLWAY - SAME

JENNA, sweet and wonderful, carries a sick, coughing YOUNG DAISY (3).

YOUNG DAISY

Are we there yet, mommy?

JENNA

Yes! We're here!

Jenna approaches the front door. She takes out her keys with her loose handle and fumbles around as she opens the door.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Raven and Brock make out passionately. Raven moves her hand down to Brock's crotch.

Whoa! Whoa! What'd I tell you about the refractory period. It's still sensitive.

RAVEN

(giggling)

Oh dear me, I am so sorry.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jenna puts down Daisy, Raven's chuckle is heard faintly.

Jenna quizzically looks at the shut bedroom door.

She steps to it and pauses. The giggle comes again. Her face goes white.

She doesn't want to believe it.

DAISY

MOMMY!

Jenna jumps as Daisy tugs her leg then COUGHS.

BEDROOM

Brock pushes Raven aside as he perks up.

BROCK

Shit! Shit! Shit!

Raven looks around in a panic.

Brock gestures to stop, then his face falls, and he shakes his head.

He gets out of bed and stands up, Raven stares him down with a look of confusion.

She waves him back.

RAVEN

(whispering)

Brock!

Brock reaches for the doorknob just as--

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

JENNA (O.S.)

Brock?

Jenna, please don't scream or hit me.

JENNA (O.S.)

What?

Brock opens the door. Revealing Jenna standing there. Staring at the half naked Brock and Raven standing side-by-side.

Beat.

Jenna PUNCHES Brock in the nose. He reels backwards grabbing it, instantly bleeding.

RAVEN

HEY!

Raven SLAPS Jenna.

Jenna stumbles back. Then stands upright.

JENNA

What the fuck!?

BROCK

I'm sorry! I thought you were coming back after the weekend!

JENNA

What the hell does that matter?!

BROCK

I don't know!

JENNA

You... you... you...

Jenna stumbles back further... her breathing becomes more labored. Daisy stands there staring confusedly at her parents and the strange woman.

BROCK

Jenna?

YOUNG DAISY

Mommy?

Jenna tries catching her breath, but she finds it increasingly difficult.

She stumbles and crashes to the floor and starts waving her hands.

JENNA

Ep... Epi...

Brock looks over at the kitchen counter and the open jar of peanut butter.

BROCK

Oh no!

Raven notices.

RAVEN

Oh shit. She needs an Epipen! Where is it?

BROCK

I-I didn't refill it! I was going--

Brock rushes over and picks up Jenna.

Daisy's lip trembles in growing fright.

DAISY

Daddy? Is mommy okay?

BROCK

We're going to the hospital, baby. Raven can you bring her.

Raven nods.

DAISY

Daddy?

BROCK

Daisy, it's going to be okay, This is my friend Raven. She is going to take care of you for a few minutes, okay?

Daisy starts crying.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I'll see you at the hospital.

Brock picks Jenna up and hurries out the door.

INT. BROCK'S LIVING ROOM - PRESENT DAY

Brock finishes chewing his last bite of toast. He swallows.

Then he gathers up the crumbs with his fingers and licks them.

A faint TAP TAP TAP, like nails hitting a window. Brock freezes... then looks up and around.

TAP. TAP. TAP.

Brock slowly moves around the room in a crouch, trying to locate the sound.

TAP. TAP. TAP. Brock nears his bedroom door.

TAP. TAP. TAP. Slightly louder. That's where the sound's coming from.

Brock hesitates for a moment.

He spots the pieces of the ceiling fan on the living room floor.

He picks up one of the blades and holds it close, ready to use it as a weapon.

TAP. TAP. TAP.

Brock reaches out his hand to his bedroom door. He slowly turns the handle.

TAP. TAP. TAP. Getting louder.

The door CREAKS open. TAP. TAP. TAP.

The room is dark. Brock looks into the darkness. He can't see a thing.

Silence.

Brock looks over at the light switch.

He considers it.

Then switches it on. Light fills the room and standing directly before him is--

DAISY.

Bright eyes and blonde hair. Standing in the center of the room. Smiling creepily and waving.

DAISY

Hi, daddy!

Brock freezes. Then SCREAMS in shock and reels backwards slamming the wall behind him and falling to the ground.

DAISY (CONT'D)

Daddy, what's wrong?

Daisy walks forward with her arms outstretched.

BROCK

Get back! Stay away from me!

He swings the fan blade wildly. Daisy continues forward. The blade STRIKES her - It smashes over her head.

Daisy lets out a blood curdling scream and evaporates into a wisp of black smoke and vanishes into thin air.

Brock, sweaty and panting, drops the fan. He sits there on the floor a moment.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- -- Brock unplugs the toaster
- -- Brock turns on the water to the bathtub
- -- Brock takes off his shirt
- -- Brock puts his Santa Claus costume back on
- -- Brock plugs in the toaster into a bathroom outlet
- -- Brock turns off the water to the now-filled bathtub

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Brock, as Santa, submerges himself into the bathtub.

He holds out the toaster...

BROCK

Santa Claus is coming to town!

Brock closes his eyes, ready, then drops the toaster.

But the power cord extends all the way and snaps out of its socket just before SPLASHING in the water.

Nothing happens.

Brock opens his eyes... then looks at the power cord.

He groans in frustration and is about to exit the tub but the lights start flickering.

Brock's eyes dart around, nerves and anxiety rising.

The lights SHUT OFF.

Brock's breathing reaches the point of hyperventilation.

A low, cool breath whispers through the room.

A trail of smokes manifests itself into the Creature. Lit by the moonlight from the far out window.

Brock relaxes slightly at the sight of him.

BROCK (CONT'D)

It's you.

CREATURE

Indeed.

BROCK

Can you turn the light back on? I feel this is a bit unnecessary.

CREATURE

You sought out advise, did you not?

BROCK

Advice? No. No, I don't need advice.

CREATURE

You were at the church earlier today.

BROCK

Yes, it was a bad idea.

CREATURE

Both churches.

BROCK

And I almost went to the church of Scientology too. I was out of my mind. Just give me a break and leave me alone.

CREATURE

I cannot do that, Brock.

BROCK

I don't know why I listen to you.

CREATURE

You still do not believe I exist?

No.

CREATURE

I see... You have a hole in your soul, Brock.

BROCK

I'm aware.

CREATURE

I am just here to fill it.

BROCK

And I don't want it to be filled. I want it to be finished.

CREATURE

A soul never dies.

BROCK

I don't believe in souls.

CREATURE

What do you believe in?

BROCK

Life. And death. And I want death. So, please, if you want to help, you'll let me die.

CREATURE

You underestimate the value of life.

BROCK

You underestimate how much I don't give a shit.

The Creature grunts, the room rattles. Water splashes out the sides of the bathtub.

BROCK (CONT'D)

You're not going to intimidate me. You lost all credibility when you stated that your purpose for being here was to keep me alive instead of actually killing--

The Creature BELLOWS out a howling, demonic SCREAM.

The bathroom mirror CRACKS as the Creature CHARGES at the flinching Brock.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. METAL ROOM - UNKNOWN

Four metal walls.

A metal table with two metal chairs across from it. Brock, still dressed as Santa, now dry, sits at one of the chairs.

He looks around the steel room, panic in his eyes.

A loud CREAK as metal scrapes against metal. A door opening.

Brock turns to it. A chubby man in his forties walks out, holding a tape recorder from the 1970s.

It's L. RON HUBBARD.

He sits with a GRUNT as he sets up the recorder in complete, eerie silence.

As he turns the mic to face Brock--

HUBBARD

Are you ready for your audit?

Brock looks around the room, avoiding the cold, unblinking eyes of the cult leader.

BROCK

No. I don't--

Hubbard immediately bursts out into a fit of rage, slamming both fists down on the metal table.

HUBBARD

I am here to help you, Mister Leishman. You should be honored to have me by your side. To nurture you. Console you. You will understand your true feelings. Lost in time. Over trillions of years. You will be cleansed. Clear. A guilt-free conscience. You will be yourself again. Do you understand me?

Brock just stares, he has no intention of responding any time soon.

Hubbard relaxes.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

It will be fun. You won't regret this experience.

Brock looks at the ceiling.

BROCK

(shouting)

You can't keep me here forever.

HUBBARD

Okay, I'm going to start the session... Do you have any pets?

Brock doesn't respond.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

Do you have any pets?

BROCK

No.

HUBBARD

Have you ever had any pets?

Brock looks down at the table.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

Look at me.

Brock looks up.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

Have you ever had any pets?

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

When you were a kid you had pets?

BROCK

When I was a kid, I had a pet.

HUBBARD

A dog?

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

What kind of dog?

A doberman.

HUBBARD

What was its name?

BROCK

Mister Skookies.

HUBBARD

Did you name it?

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

How old were you when he died?

BROCK

Ten.

HUBBARD

How did Mister Skookies die?

Brock doesn't answer. Looks away.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

Again.

Brock regains eye contact with Hubbard.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

How old were you when Mr. Skookies died?

BROCK

Ten.

HUBBARD

How did Mister Skookies die?

BROCK

Car.

HUBBARD

Mister Skookies was run over by a car?

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

Were you responsible for it?

Yes.

HUBBARD

How?

BROCK

I let him off the leash.

HUBBARD

You let him off the leash and because you did that, he was hit by the car?

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

Did you feel guilty?

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

Do you feel guilty about it now?

BROCK

No, I'm over it.

HUBBARD

Have you had any other pets?

BROCK

No.

HUBBARD

Do you feel any guilt now?

Brock hesitates.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

Again. Do you feel guilt about

Mister Skookie's death?

BROCK

Not anymore.

HUBBARD

Have you had any other pets?

BROCK

No.

Do you feel any guilt now?

Another hesitation.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

Again! Do you feel guilt about

Mister Skookie's death?

BROCK

Yes!

HUBBARD

Have you had any other pets?

BROCK

No, I haven't had any other fucking pets.

HUBBARD

Do you--

BROCK

Yes! I feel guilt. Of course I feel guilt. I'm a fucking human--

HUBBARD

What do you feel guilty about?

No response. Hubbard analyzes Brock as his eyes wander.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

You had a daughter.

BROCK

No... No.

HUBBARD

What was your daughter's name?

Brock shuts his eyes.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

Look at me.

Brock complies.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

What was your daughter's name?

BROCK

Daisy.

And you are responsible for Daisy's death?

BROCK

No.

HUBBARD

You let your daughter off her leash and she was hit by a car.

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

You are responsible for it.

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

You had a wife.

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

How is your wife?

BROCK

Dead.

HUBBARD

How did she die?

BROCK

Peanut allergy.

HUBBARD

Were you responsible?

BROCK

I didn't know she would be coming home that day.

HUBBARD

Were you responsible for the death of your wife?

BROCK

No. I didn't know she would be coming home that day.

Again. How is your wife?

BROCK

She's dead!

HUBBARD

Are you responsible?

BROCK

No.

HUBBARD

Again.

Brock SCREAMS.

HUBBARD (CONT'D)

How did your wife die?

BROCK

Peanut butter!

HUBBARD

Are you responsible?

BROCK

Yes! Yes, I'm responsible.

HUBBARD

Do you want to kill yourself?

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

Why do you want to kill yourself?

BROCK

So I don't feel the guilt.

HUBBARD

You think killing yourself will rid you of the guilt you feel for killing your family?

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

Why?

BROCK

Because I'll be dead.

What do you believe happens when you die?

BROCK

Nothing.

HUBBARD

And nothing means you feel no guilt.

BROCK

Yes.

HUBBARD

Do you believe in Santa Claus?

BROCK

Do I... what?

HUBBARD

Again. Why do you want to kill yourself?

Brock SCREAMS again. He stands up furiously, clutches the chair and chucks it against the wall with a loud SMASH.

BROCK

Shut up! Shut up!

HUBBARD

You brought this on yourself Mister Leishman!

BROCK

I'm not listening to you!
 (shouting at the ceiling)
Okay! I'm done!

HUBBARD

Your guilt is a feeling that has been embedded in particles within our ether for trillions of years. You are recognizing it--

BROCK

--No! No! I just want to die!--

HUBBARD

--And I can clear you of this feeling! Again. Do you believe in Santa Claus?

No! Stop! Enough!

WHITEOUT.

EXT. NORTH POLE - DAY

A mountain of snow building as more falls from the sky.

A hand reaches out and grabs a handful of snow.

Then, out emerges Brock. He shivers as he shakes off the snow from his Santa outfit. He breathes heavily, rubbing his hands together.

He reaches into his pockets and shuffles around before pulling out two heavy gloves.

Brock quickly puts them on, as he continues to shake and shiver.

DAISY (O.S.)

Daddy! What are you doing over here, silly!?

Brock turns around rapidly, spotting Daisy.

She is dressed as an elf. She runs up to Brock as quickly as she can in the heavy snow.

BROCK

Daisy?

DAISY

Mommy said you were taking a walk. But you were gone for so long I wanted to look for you. She said, uh, she said I shouldn't go, but I goed anyway and now I find you.

Brock's absolutely speechless.

DAISY (CONT'D)

C'mon! Let's go home! It's freeeezing!

Daisy tugs on Brock's arm.

DAISY (CONT'D)

Let's qo! Let's qo! Let's qo!

BROCK

Okay, yeah, I'm going.

Daisy laughs as she starts running off.

Brock follows and runs into the massive, empty, white, winter landscape.

EXT. SANTA'S FACTORY - DAY

Brock and Daisy walk towards a giant, completely functioning factory.

Vehicles transport supplies, smoke exits chimneys, etc.

Daisy runs ahead as Brock stops to take in the sight.

Daisy turns around.

DATSY

Come on, Daddy! We're almost there! Come on!

Daisy laughs as she runs ahead.

INT. SANTA'S FACTORY - DAY

Convener belts and robots work at breakneck speed as the buzz of a fast-moving assembly line reverberate throughout the structure.

HUNDREDS OF ELVES, of all shapes and sizes, but all dressed in outfits like Daisy's, work.

Brock walks through as Elves turn to him and nod.

FAT ELF

Hiya, boss!

Brock forces a grin and waves, still at a loss of words.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Brock slides a large metal door closed as he enters an elaborately decorated living area, like a castle, covered in green and red wallpapers, carpets, and miscellaneous items.

Brock and Daisy start walking down the carpeted hallway.

DAISY

I wrote a story! Wanna see it!

Daisy rushes off to her room.

Brock glances around his fancy place in awe, he turns to--

Jenna, with bright white hair and dressed in a Mrs. Claus nightgown sits in bed reading CRIME AND PUNISHMENT.

The room is elaborately decorated and the bed is surrounded by cloths like a bridesmaid.

JENNA

You're back.

BROCK

Jenna?

Jenna flips the page. Brock looks at her, tears filling his eyes.

BROCK (CONT'D)

What are you reading?

JENNA

I'm happy you're back. You were gone a while. How was your walk?

BROCK

It was... good. Yeah, uh... I just... you know, needed some air.

JENNA

I understand. This is a stressful time of year.

BROCK

Yes. Stressful. Very stressful.

JENNA

Tim said he was looking for you. I told him you were taking today off. He said okay.

Brock stares at Jenna.

BROCK

Tim?

JENNA

Yes.

Brock doesn't know what any of this means.

JENNA (CONT'D)

Come to bed.

Brock walks over to the bed and sits next to Jenna. He can't take his eyes off of her.

Jenna looks at him and smiles.

JENNA (CONT'D)

What?

BROCK

(weeping)

I'm... I'm so sorry, Jenna. I'm so damn sorry. I was stupid.

His eyes fill with tears. She looks at him surprised. She takes him in her arms. She kisses him sweetly.

JENNA

Shh. Honey, what's wrong. It's okay. I'm right here. What's wrong?

BELLS RING DISTANTLY.

Brock squeezes Jenna tightly. She rubs his back tenderly.

Daisy rushes into the room.

DATSY

There's chocolate for breakfast!

Daisy immediately runs out.

JENNA

You should get going.

BROCK

No, not yet.

Brock buries his face in her lap and squeezes her tightly.

JENNA

Brock, it's time. You have to go.

Brock looks up to protest and gasps.

He's holding the creature.

CREATURE

This is nice.

BROCK

No!

Brock throws himself backwards in terror.

CREATURE

Do you want to be the big spoon or the little spoon?

BROCK

Go away! Get the hell away from me! You're not taking me!

Brock runs away.

CREATURE

You'd think with that much running he'd be in better shape.

INT. SANTA'S FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Brock runs into the factory and is met by a fat little MANAGER ELF. Brock looks around scared.

MANAGER ELF

We got the entire northern hemisphere covered and eighty percent through the south, boss. We should be done a few hours before deadline.

BROCK

Uh, yeah. Okay.

MANAGER ELF

Well, I'm sure the timing may not be the best, but... I'd like to ask you about a raise?

BROCK

A raise?

MANAGER ELF

Yes, sir.

BROCK

Uh, yeah. Sure. Sure.

MANAGER ELF

Oh, thank you, sir. How you manage to stay so jolly this time of year is beyond me.

Brock turns to hurry away and bumps into another elf - a DOCTOR ELF standing next to a cart with a red nosed reindeer.

DOCTOR ELF

Mr. Claus. We have a bit of a problem.

Brock stares at the Doctor Elf in more utter confusion.

DOCTOR ELF (CONT'D)

He was like this yesterday. We thought it would be temporary, but it seems the symptoms are lingering.

BROCK

What... What's wrong with him?

DOCTOR ELF

We think it's depression.

BROCK

Depression?

A second elf - NEUROSCIENCE ELF steps forward waving an x-ray of the reindeer's head.

NEUROSCIENCE ELF

There is clear inflammation of the amygdala, which would lead me to believe that depression is a strong candidate for Rudolph's lethargy.

PSYCHOLOGIST ELF

I can second that.

BROCK

Look, I don't know--

A REINDEER SPECIALIST ELF appears next to Brock.

REINDEER SPECIALIST

Now, hold on just a second. I believe there may be something we can do.

Another Elf hurries to make her voice heard

THERAPIST ELF

It is impossible!

REINDEER SPECIALIST

It may be possible for a short recovery. With the right dosage of medication of course.

They all begin speaking over one another.

THERAPIST ELF

I may be able to talk to him. I had a case study earlier this year on the great Alaskan reindeer genocide.

 $\begin{array}{c} \text{REINDEER SPECIALIST} \\ \text{We could use all the help we can} \end{array}$

DOCTOR ELF

It's going to have to be quick. We don't have much time and may need to make a decision.

BROCK

Decision? What decision?

get.

DOCTOR ELF

Hopefully it doesn't come to that. I know how it made you feel last time.

The Reindeer Specialist gently strokes Rudolph's back who breathes lazily.

REINDEER SPECIALIST

Hey there, buddy. How ya doing? Long year? I know it's tough this season. But think about the reward.

THERAPIST ELF

You're loved. You're needed. We all need you. We depend on you. Without you, we're all useless.

BROCK

Listen, I don't have time to talk about all this--

Rudolph looks up and stares deep into Brock's eyes, silencing him. All the elves react as if Rudolph spoke.

REINDEER SPECIALIST

I see...

THERAPIST ELF

That is very interesting.

BROCK

What's interesting?

REINDEER SPECIALIST

There's no easy way to say this but... he's suicidal.

Brock presses down on his eyes in genuine frustration.

DOCTOR ELF

I didn't want it to have to come to this.

Doctor Elf sighs and remorsefully shakes his head. They all begin to shout.

REINDEER SPECIALIST

No. I won't allow it!

DOCTOR ELF

NEUROSCIENCE ELF Someone has to make the

choice!

REINDEER SPECIALIST
No! We can't do this!

We need a decision!

THERAPIST ELF

It's the only way Mr. Claus!

Daisy, holding crayons and paper with drawings, and the Manager Elf, holding paperwork on a clipboard appear.

DAISY

Do you want to see my story, Daddy?

MANAGER ELF

Just need your signature on a few forms, boss.

Everyone is shouting for Brock's attention. He closes his eyes and covers his ears.

Silence.

He opens his eyes. All stare at Brock for an awkward second.

BROCK

What?

DOCTOR ELF

Euthanasia, Mr. Claus.

Doctor Elf stares Brock, a look of sorrow in his eyes.

Besides Brock stands Jenna, and behind her is a congregation of BAGPIPE PLAYING ELVES.

The Doctor Elf holds an euthanasia gun.

DOCTOR ELF (CONT'D)

We're ready.

Doctor Elf hands the gun out to Brock.

DOCTOR ELF (CONT'D)

We're ready.

BROCK

(hesitant)

Okay.

DOCTOR ELF

Take the gun, Mister Claus.

BROCK

Why don't you do it?

DOCTOR ELF

It's your responsibility, Mr. Claus.

Brock grabs the gun and walks out to Rudolph. He points the gun at an X marked with paint between Rudolph's eyes.

Rudolph grunts as Brock closes his eyes... then pulls the trigger.

Rudolph collapses and there's a moment of silence.

Then the bagpipes start playing a mourning song.

Brock opens his eyes to--

EXT. SANTA'S FACTORY - NIGHT

He is seated in a SLEIGH with eight reindeer attached to the front. He looks around, confused by this, yet another, jump in space and time. Daisy beside him seated and smiling.

BROCK

Daisy?

DAISY

I'm so happy I get to come along. I know mommy didn't want me to, but that's why you're the best daddy in the world! I love you!

She hugs him. He still looks around in a near panic.

THOUSANDS OF ELVES line up in the distance as they watch.

On the front of the factory is a huge clock that's about to strike midnight.

MANAGER ELF

Another fantastic year, boss.

Brock nods.

The clock strikes midnight as the BELLS TOLL loudly.

Brock looks over the elves and sees the Creature standing there. Brock's eyes go wide in fear, but the Creature does not move.

MANAGER ELF (CONT'D)

Whenever you're ready sir.

Brock looks around, still unsure.

An awkward beat passes as everything goes silent.

BROCK

Yeah... okay.

Brock snaps the reins on the reindeer and immediately the reindeer start running until they gather enough speed and fly into the air.

Brock gasps in shock at the speed.

His mouth falls open in shock and wonder. He is flying. A sleigh. Dressed as Santa Claus.

The Elves on the ground wave, smile and applaud in awe. Jenna is among them and watches on with a passive expression.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The sleigh flies through the sky. Brock gently whips the reindeer. They pick up pace, and fly faster and faster...

They have no intention of slowing down soon.

Daisy puts her hands in the air.

DATSY

Wooo!

Brock looks down at the crowd of cheering elves. The Creature is standing over Jenna.

EXT. STREETS OF CANADA - NIGHT

As flakes peacefully drift from the heavens, the sleigh drifts over snowy homes. Daisy is chattering happily.

DAISY

I wanted to color every page, but I was worried I'd run out of crayons. And I know, I could ask for new crayons this year, but I wanted to think of something really, really special. I don't know. I gotta think harder about it. Oh! Are we at the first stop? Can I bring the first present?

She smiles hugely up at him, and he can't help by smile back.

BROCK

Okay, baby. You can take the first present in.

DATSY

Yay!

As the sleigh comes in for a gentle landing, Daisy bounces happily in her seat.

Brock looks around, and something catches his eye in the distance. Brock rises from his bench.

Daisy is digging through a sack of toys for a present.

Brock steps off the sleigh, drawn to the figure standing just out of sight in the falling snow.

As he gets closer and closer the figure reveals itself to be a WOMAN, frozen in time, a frantic look of panic on her face as she carries to plastic bags.

Brock studies her, looking her up and down.

He pokes her face.

She remains frozen. Brock looks over at a building with a CLOCK on it.

It's frozen at midnight, neither hand moving.

DAISY (O.S.) (CONT'D) C'mon daddy! Let's go!

Brock starts walking back to her daughter where a moderately sized box of presents hover behind her, mirroring her every movement, following her wherever she goes.

He smirks. Daisy laughs as she runs across the street.

Suddenly, lights flash from around the bend.

The car HONKS as it barely ZOOMS by Daisy, nearly flattening her.

BROCK

DAISY!

He races to her and scoops her into his arms, holding her closely.

DAISY

Whoah! That was a close one!

BROCK

Don't you ever, ever run on the street like that again. You understand?

DAISY

Nothing was moving! Everything is supposed to be stuck! That was weird.

BROCK

Just don't do it!

DAISY

Okay, Daddy, I won't.

BROCK

Okay... Okay...

DAISY

Should I put it by the fireplace? There's no tree.

Brock looks up.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

They are in a home now. Brock looks around. He doesn't remember coming in here.

BROCK

Yeah... Put it by the fireplace...

MAN (O.S.)

You can stop right there. Put your hands in the air. The little girl as well, ya goddamn trespassing sons of bitches.

Brock puts his hands in the air.

BROCK

Daisy.

DAISY

But--

BROCK

Shhh!

Daisy shushes and puts her hands in the air, a look of utter confusion covers her face.

MAN (O.S.)

Now look at me in the eye.

Brock looks over the shotgun wielding MAN in his sixties, LONG WHITE HAIR AND BEARD. A definite RABBI.

RABBI

You think this is funny?

BROCK

I'm sorry. There must have been a mistake.

RABBI

Does this get you off? Huh?

The Rabbi closes in on Brock threateningly.

RABBI (CONT'D)

Are you getting off?

BROCK

No. Rabbi, no. I'm not getting off.

RABBI

Good. Cause I'm about to shoot you up like a rabies shot.

BROCK

We just got the wrong house. That's all sir. Please let us go.

The Rabbi snarls.

RABBT

Not so easy.

DAISY

Daddy--

The Rabbi FIRES A SHOT.

Daisy SCREAMS. Brock immediately throws himself onto Daisy protectively.

RABBI

NOT A WORD.

BROCK

We're terribly sorry if we've insulted you. It's not our intention. We're on... we're doing... I mean... It's a funny thing how Rabbis look like Santa Clauses, right?

RABBI

What a disgusting stereotype you antisemitic piece of filth. I should bury you underground alive. Where do you get off?

BROCK

Please stop asking me that.

RABBI

Everybody loves Christmas!

BROCK

I don't! Honestly! I'm just - I'm
just trying to - to keep this thing
going, or I'll... I'll lose her...

Brock looks imploringly up at the Man.

RABBI

Don't you rationalize this. I've had enough, already. The faux jolliness. It's fake. It's all fake. It means nothing.

The Rabbi, calming down, goes over to the couch and takes a seat.

RABBI (CONT'D)

The entire Target is decorated for Christmas. But only one shelf has Hanukkah supplies on it.

BROCK

Yeah, I know what you mean. Can't even go to the supermarket without being bombarded with it all.

RABBI

It's a fever dream! A made up cultural phenomenon to make us feel like we're together as one.

BROCK

But it's all bullshit. It's just a day of the year....

RABBI

Used to be some historical and religious meaning behind, but's all forgotten. What's the point?

Brock stares at the man and lowers his gaze to Daisy.

BROCK

It's all bullshit.

RABBI

What's this day mean to anyone anymore? What's it mean to you?

They share a long look.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

Brock and Daisy walk towards the sleigh. Brock takes off his Santa hat and looks at Daisy.

DAISY

That was scary.

BROCK

Yeah.

He looks at her a long while. She looks up at him and smiles.

DAISY

Luckily you were there to keep me safe. You always keep me safe, Daddy.

BROCK

Yeah.

He kneels and holds her face in his hands.

DATSY

What are you doing?

BROCK

Just looking at you. Really, really looking at you.

DAISY

(giggling)

Okay.

BROCK

I love you, you know that?

DAISY

Of course you do. You're Santa. Santa loves everyone.

BROCK

No, I'm not Santa, baby. Santa's not real.

DAISY

What do you mean?

BROCK

None of this is real.

The snow begins to fall more heavily, and the world slowly turns white - completely white - as Father looks into Daughter's face.

BROCK (CONT'D)

But it was nice, wasn't it?

Daisy keeps smiling. Tears drip down Brock's face.

DAISY

Do you want to get going to the next place?

BROCK

(pained)

I do. I really, really do.

Brock takes Daisy into his arms and holds her close.

He closes his eyes and lets the snow wash over them. And soon, the world is a blank canvas of nothingness...

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Brock rises from the bathtub, soaked in water. He is calm, though tears still mix with the water running down his face.

The creature, resting against the sink, inches closer to him.

CREATURE

You see now?

BROCK

Was that hell?

CREATURE

It's what you made it.

BROCK

In a long life of bad choices, I think the only one I ever made that was good and right was her.

CREATURE

Funny.

BROCK

That's funny to you?

CREATURE

Isn't it?

BROCK

How is that funny?

CREATURE

You think you made one good choice. But how did you get to that choice?

BROCK

I don't know... Luck, I guess.

CREATURE

You made a series of choices that led to Daisy.

BROCK

Well, yeah.

CREATURE

Doesn't that make all the choices up to that one good choices too by proxy?

Brock thinks about that.

CREATURE (CONT'D)

I think you have learned your lesson.

BROCK

Now what?

CREATURE

You make more choices. You have a toaster. You could install another ceiling fan. You could pick up another set at the comedy club. And those are just off the top of my head.

Brock sits in the water and says nothing.

BROCK

And what are <u>you</u> going to choose to do?

CREATURE

Well, I have orders. Got a whole line of people I gotta take. And you're on that list. I gotta do what I'm told to do.

He rises and leans close to Brock's face.

CREATURE (CONT'D)

But lines are reeeeeeally long, aren't they?

It smirks and gives Brock a wink. It leans back, turns, and blinks out of existence.

Brock rubs his face, recovering from the experience.

BROCK (V.O.)

You got any kids, sir? (laughing)

Haha. The look of fear just now on

your face. That's the look of a single guy who has no immediate plans to be a parent. Relax, buddy. I'm not going to hand you a baby or anything... Or am I?

Laughter.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

Brock is on stage performing. There is a good sized crowd enjoying his set.

BROCK

Funny thing about all the men in here. Whether we have kids or not, we're all potential dads. Yeah, scary, right? Some of you are definitely not dad material. I used to be dad material, but things change.

(a beat) I got a cat.

Laughter.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Don't celebrate me just yet. It ran away. I didn't feel too bad about it. I don't think it liked me very much. We had different taste in movies.

Laughs.

BROCK (CONT'D)

But I'm still a potential dad, right? Because of our baby making facility down town. All the men potentially have an infinite amount of kids just stewing around in our jeans. And having the potential for an infinite amount of kids means we gotta be at least capable of taking care of one kid. That's just math. Infinite potential kids equals one real kid. We call that Schrodinger's Sperm in the science world, which I am clearly a part of.

Laughs.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I know there's a lot of sperm in a man's balls, but I'm not sure there's an infinite amount. I mean, close enough though right? Even my over-forty substantial testicles have a bound in the physical universe quantity of sperm.

(MORE)

BROCK (CONT'D)

I just don't think anyone wants to count... I think a lifetime's worth of sperm is close enough to infinity sperm that mathematicians, if you were to write that down, they just go, That equals infinity. (in a voice)
"You wanna check those numbers?"
 (another voice)
"Just write infinity."

Laughter.

BROCK (CONT'D)

There are three types of infinity right? There's the countable infinity, which is all the numbers you can name. There's the uncountable infinity, which is all the numbers in-between. And then there's the real disgusting and inconvenient to count infinity.

(in an audience member)

(in an audience member)
I can't be bothered to count all
our possible sperm, sir, so I'm
just going to write "infinity."

The crowd laughs. Brock takes a drink of water from his glass.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Tomorrow's Christmas. I for one am thrilled to be reuniting with all my loved ones: gingerbread cookies, eggnog, sweat pants. It's time for family. But even at the best of times, the tough stuff we're going through can make the season tense, and I don't know about any of you, but it's been a tough year. And if you're worried about conflicts over the dinner table with family, watch how much you have to drink. I recommend either no drinks... or all of the drinks.

Laughter and hoots.

BROCK (CONT'D)

It's a really fine line. It's really that two and a half drink middle ground where Uncle Chris starts asking, "Well why don't we have a White History month?"

Laughter.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I'll assume those cheers were for the punchline and not in support of Uncle Chris.

(chuckling)

I think we've done ourselves a disservice by adapting to outrageous statements like that. We've lost our capacity to truly be shocked. But that's the incredible superpower of humanity, isn't it? To make things normal. Our ability to adapt. To learn. Name another species that can live in the Amazon and the North Pole. And the reason is, we're very good at being--

(a voice)
"Well, it's cold all the time.
We're gonna build an igloo, and
we're gonna hunt some whales. And
we're gonna get through. Now, who
wants some blubber on their
omelet?"

Laughter.

BROCK (CONT'D)

And because that is the human being's superpower - that is the essence, in some ways, of being human - you adjust and acclimate to whatever situation you find yourself in. And you get through it. You lose all your hair? Comb over whatever you got left and make it work. Single? Swipe right until someone swipes right back. Not a young buck anymore. It's cool. Now, you're a silver fox. Fat?

(taps his belly)
Hm. When I get there, I'll let you all know the solution.

Laughter. A wolf whistle.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Thank you, sir.

Chuckles.

BROCK (CONT'D)

And if you find yourself at the end of your rope... Well, the fan might tear out of the ceiling and give you a reason to remodel the living room.

(a beat, he smiles)
Good or bad, left or right, heaven
or hell, you just gotta make a
choice. And when it's all over, and
you're waiting in that line at the
pearly gates, just be happy the guy
standing in front of you doesn't
have B.O. And if he does, maybe you
deserve a whiff of that for
eternity because of your choices.
But at least you were alive to make
them.

(a beat)

That's my time. Thanks for letting me babble, everyone. Merry Christmas.

Applause. Brock waves and walks off stage.

FADE TO BLACK.