

SECRET SANTAS

An original screenplay by

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HOME SWEET HOME

-*"It's your holiday not mine bigshot!"*

EXT. PHIL DRAKE'S SUBURBAN HOME - MORNING

SUBURBAN HELL. Tacky cookie-cutter houses. All have usual holiday decorations except the DRAKE home. A large eight-armed Indian statue stands alongside an inflatable snowman that sports a third eye on its forehead.

INT. DRAKE HOME FOYER - MORNING

Colored lantern lights decorate the foyer. Hard charging sales rep PHIL DRAKE is about to leave for work. Eight year old son RAVI fires a football into Phil's stomach.

PHIL

Can't now Ravi. *Here.* (points to wall) He's going long!

Phil throws the ball off the wall.

PHIL (CONT'D)

See? It comes right back! The imagination is a wonderful thing!

Phil's wife BAHTYA enters.

BAHTYA (MIFFED)

You're *working*? You promised the kids you'd be *home*! Susan Garrett's husband is taking them to Aspen for the Holidays!

PHIL

Susan Garrett's husband is a plastic surgeon! He lifts one ass then takes a month off! Sales isn't like that.

BAHTYA

It's *your* holiday not *mine* bigshot!
I sacrifice too! My parents wanted
to disown me when I married you!

Phil exits, momentarily relieved as he closes the front door. A MOTION ACTIVATED SANTA CLAUS DOORKNOCKER Ho Ho's, DROPS ITS PANTS AND FARTS. Phil RIPS OUT THE BATTERY. The MORNING PAPER HITS HIM. Phil chases the paperboy and THROWS THE BATTERY at him.

PHIL

Jacob! One of these days I'm gonna
knock you right into Christmas
past!

YIN AND YANG

-*"I love working the holidays Larry!"*

INT. NEVIN'S GROUP LOBBY - MORNING

GRACE, a dismissive secretary sits at her desk. Phil enters.

GRACE

Larry wants to see you. Lockhart's
in there. Maybe it's a *firing*?

PHIL

What?! Fire his number one guy?

GRACE

A girl can dream.

Phil grabs a framed picture off Grace's desk.

PHIL

Boyfriend?

Grace grabs the picture back.

GRACE

Keep your hands off my stuff!

PHIL

Right! Every guy wants to get his hands on your 'stuff.'

GRACE

You'd be surprised.

PHIL

So what's the fad this week?

GRACE

I don't know. Jiu Jitsu or something. What am I his mother?

PHIL

Grace I've never met anyone whose name and disposition were such opposites.

GRACE

Go to hell.

PHIL

When I'm with you I feel like I'm halfway there.

Grace starts to FLIP OFF Phil from behind as he walks away.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Right back at ya.

INT. LARRY NEVIN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Japanese style office. LARRY NEVINS, has sales rep PETER LOCKHART bent over the desk in a SUGGESTIVELY AWKWARD MARTIAL ARTS HOLD.

PHIL

Two questions; Are you two going to get a room? And why is Grace such a stone cold be-atch?

Larry releases Peter and CONTINUES PRACTICING MOVES.

LARRY

She got left at the altar once.

PHIL

Smart guy. You should put *him* in sales.

LARRY

Don't tempt me.

PHIL
Nice PJ's, Lar. Yoko dress you?

PETER
Yuno.

LARRY
Yono thinks I have too many irons
in the fire. Since I've been with
her I've realized something is
missing in my life.

PHIL
David Carradine?

LARRY
Balance. Yin and Yang. Opposing
forces working together to create
strength and a solid foundation.
Peter wasn't much of a challenge.
Try to throw me Phil.

PHIL
I'm not throwing you.

LARRY
Throw me or I cut your commission
rate in half.

Phil throws Larry easily in one motion.

LARRY (CONT'D)
It's only been a week! Help me up.

PHIL
By February you'll be Jackie Chan.

LARRY
Why don't you sit down Phil?

PHIL
You know in Western civilization
it's customary to not have an
audience when you fire someone.

LARRY
Relax. You're not getting fired.

PHIL
Who said anything about *me*?

Phil makes a 'just kidding' gesture at Peter.

LARRY

Guys. Why do our clients need a media agency? Because they're inarticulate. They need us to speak for them. But in order to do that we must be able to speak to them. You two are articulate in complimentary ways; each with your own strengths, your own styles --

PHIL

-- Cut to the chase Larry.

LARRY

Peter's a nice guy. You're a dick. I'm pairing you up.

PHIL

That's crazy! I'm your best sales rep! He's been here what--*five months*? And I guarantee I've beaten him every one of those months!

LARRY

Do you know the abandonment rate for your recent accounts?

PHIL

No I don't and frankly if some people can't keep their word and honor their commitments I don't see how that reflects poorly on me!

LARRY

My Eastern studies have taught me that it's about hearts and minds, not *aggression*. Okay maybe *some* of it's about aggression. The point is you intimidate people into making decisions they're not comfortable with. Then when their head clears they call me and cancel. And between what you sell and lose and what Peter sells and keeps it's a wash. Besides Peter wants to learn from the *best*, don't you Peter? (ignoring Peter) Of course he does.

PHIL

Who? Who do I intimidate?

LARRY

Chuck Fox says you told him something might happen to his kids if he didn't up his package level.

PHIL

I told Chuck Fox if he didn't spend some money and diversify his sales would suffer and maybe he can't afford to send his kids to a good school.

LARRY

That's what you said?

PHIL

It's what I *meant*.

LARRY

There's a guy Donald O'Shaughnessy starting a company up north. *Castle Industries*. They make lures.

Larry drops a fishing lure into the goldfish bowl.

LARRY (CONT'D)

He's going to need media and display for conventions. I know it's short notice but he wants to get this done ASAP. Peter you come up with some on site display and copy ideas. Phil you turn on the charm - such as it is. You guys can go up tomorrow and reel this in before the holidays.

PETER

Um, sir? That's *Christmas Eve*.

PHIL

I love working the holidays, Larry.

LARRY

Good, it's settled. Get directions from Grace. She grew up there.

PHIL

Grace grew up there? Then I'm sure we'll be welcomed with open arms.

LARRY

That's the spirit! So, questions, comments?

Phil raises his hand.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Phil?

PHIL

If he talks my ear off all the way
up there can I leave him?

PETER

Good one.

Larry bows. A practice kick knocks the fishbowl over. The
lure is hooked to the goldfish. He presses the intercom.

LARRY

Grace. Small pliers, large mop.

ROAD TRIP

-"The point is sometimes you gotta be the bad guy."

EXT. NUMBER 6 WEDGEWOOD APARTMENTS - MORNING

Phil arrives in a PLAIN LOOKING, LATE MODEL SEDAN and honks.

INT. PHIL'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Peter gets in with a briefcase and can of SPAGHETTIOS.

PETER

Sorry. Sorry.

Phil drives away as Peter places the Spaghettios on the dash.

PHIL

Don't sorry me. Someone should be
apologizing to us. *Christmas Eve!*
(eyes Spaghettios) You're not
actually going to eat those?

PETER

They're filling. They keep you
going for hours.

Phil shudders.

PETER (CONT'D)

So you know where we're going?

Phil HANDS AN ENVELOPE FROM GRACE ON THE DASHBOARD to Peter.

PETER (CONT'D)

(reads)

Dear Peter and Phil, I don't know where Castle Industries is. I blew out of that town twenty years ago and never looked back. Good luck, your co-worker, Grace.

PHIL

She really gives a hundred and ten percent doesn't she?

PETER (GRABBING CELL)

I'll google it.

PHIL

You can't google a startup. I guess we'll have to break up the checkers tournament at the general store and ask directions. Doesn't matter. This is a big *no sale* anyway.

PETER

How do you know?

PHIL

Think about it. A sales call on Christmas Eve? Maybe this guy's avoiding his family. Or he's alone and can't face that.

PETER

The client's wishes are what's important.

PHIL

And what about *our* wishes? Admit it. Neither of us wants to be here.

PETER (SARCASTIC)

But you 'love working the holidays.

PHIL

My wife and kids are mad at me and brownie points with Larry is no compensation. And for what? To share a glass of eggnog with some shmuck in bunghole county?

PETER
Nice attitude.

PHIL
I'm a realist. I'm a strategist.
What do you notice about this car?

Peter looks around.

PETER
Nothing.

PHIL
Exactly. We're going into unknown
territory so the safest impression
is no impression.

PETER
You rented a car so you *won't*
impress someone you *don't* know?

PHIL
Not a rental. A *borrow*. You know
Billy Costa?

PETER
Yeah the crazy car salesman on TV?

PHIL
He's a huge opera buff and I know a
guy in the ticket office at the
civic center. I get Billy opera
tickets. He lets me borrow any
vehicle I want.

PETER
And what does the ticket guy get?

PHIL
I stopped dating his sister and
married Bahtya. He's eternally
grateful. See if I know a guy's a
sportsman I'll show up in a truck
with a gun rack. If he's an
environmentalist I drive a hybrid.

PETER
Billy Costa doesn't sell those.

PHIL
Raoul the detailing guy slaps a
hybrid logo on and bingo I'm green.
He's also my brother-in-law.

PETER

So isn't Raoul mad that you married his sister?

PHIL

Bahtya was living with Raoul when I met her so he's grateful too.

PETER

Your being deceptive. It's more productive if a client knows you and you know your client.

PHIL

Like your auto parts account where the guy blew his entire budget on an actor playing a muffler?

PETER

That's how he wanted to spend his money, and by the way that actor was talented. He did summer stock.

PHIL

He wandered around an intersection blind and deaf in a muffler costume and got hit by a girl on a moped.

PETER

It generated a buzz.

PHIL

Buzz! Our job is to save these guys from themselves.

PETER

The customer is always right.

PHIL

Let me tell you something about that customer is always right crap. The customer is *usually* wrong. When you've been at this as long as I have you'll understand that.

EXT. FAST FOOD DRIVE THRU - CONTINUOUS

Phil gets coffee and a donut, FINISHING THEM BOTH before reaching the pay window.