

THE THREE WISE KIDS

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FADE IN:

EXT. ABRAMS' B&B - NIGHT

A nondescript White Van pulls up quietly in front of a nice house with two Amazon-type boxes outside the door. A name plaque reads, "ABRAMS' B&B."

A tall, thin man VINCENT ROBERTS (30), known only as "V," opens the van's door. We HEAR Christmas music from the radio. He exits the van wearing a large down jacket and black cargo pants. His long black hair exuding from a black knit cap conceals most of his face. He grabs a thin box (24" x 12" x 2") and carries it like a shield as he approaches the doorbell camera from the side.

He puts his thin box on top of two other boxes and makes "claws" out of his two hands and sings a song as he goes to work.

V

(chuckling)

Here comes Santa Claws, here comes  
Santa Claws, right down Sticky  
Fingers Lane, stealing and robbing  
all the presents, aren't these  
people lame.

He extends his gloved hand and index finger topped with a black tar substance and covers the camera lens with a quick swipe.

V (CONT'D)

Doorbell cameras rendered useless,  
oh what a beautiful sight, so hang  
your stockings but forget those  
gifts, 'cause Santa Claws came  
tonight!

He bends and removes the shipping boxes and carries them back to the van.

He tosses the two valuable boxes in the back of the van, and sets his thin box next to him on the passenger seat before driving off slowly, while singing a Christmas song and making a "claw" gesture with one hand.

V (CONT'D)

Everyday is Christmas... to a porch  
pirate!

EXT. COFFEESHOP - MORNING

A cute, ever-smiling Deputy Sheriff, MARIA SANTOS (30), in full uniform, carries a hot cup of coffee to her patrol car. She HEARS her name on the radio as she approaches. The call is from the flirting DISPATCH OFFICER (male, 30s).

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)  
Deputy Santos, over.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Maria races to get into the car to grab the radio. In her haste, she spills the hot coffee on her lap and answers the radio with a yelp.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Owww... sh... shoot!

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)  
(giggling)  
Don't shoot! It's just me. Your  
loving boyfriend. Over.

Maria rolls her eyes and looks down to see the coffee spilled on her lap, looking like she wet her pants. She rolls her eyes in disgust.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
What is it? Over.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)  
That pesky porch pirate struck five  
houses last night. Your first stop  
is the Abrams' B&B on Ponderosa  
Lane. Complaint is from the owner,  
Ben Abrams.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
I'm on it!

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)  
(laughter in the  
background)  
By the way, we caught that all on  
your body cam. Over.

She makes a sour face and races off.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - SAME

Three smiling, fun-loving 16-year-olds sit in an empty classroom. In a middle seat sits a big blonde male, BOGS SHEVCHENKO, who speaks with a strong Ukrainian accent. To his left is LATISHA JACKSON, an African American beauty with fashionable cut jeans, a hip T-shirt, and a short winter coat. To Bogs' right is CAZ ALI, a Middle Eastern darling in blue eyeglasses, a tan headscarf and a tan pantsuit. The teens are best friends, always poking, pushing, and instigating trouble for each other. A boy with two girlfriends... what could go wrong?

BOGS

It's all your fault.

LATISHA

I bet it's your fault.

CAZ

Your faults.

They start playfully hitting each other when the stern PRINCIPAL (60s, male) stomps in the room with a clipboard.

Bogs, Latisha, and Caz settle down and try not to grin, but that proves impossible.

PRINCIPAL

Is this how you wanted to begin  
Christmas break?

He glares at the clipboard.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

Which one of you is Latisha  
Jackson?

Bogs stands.

BOGS

My name is Latisha Jackson.

Caz stands.

CAZ

My name is Latisha Jackson.

The angry Principal points at Bogs' seat.

PRINCIPAL

You sit down, Mr. Bogdan  
Shevchenko.

BOGS  
They call me Bogs.

PRINCIPAL  
I said sit down, Bogs, or we'll  
send you home on the next train!  
Getting in all those fistfights.  
You should be ashamed of yourself.

Bogs sits down and looks away.

The principal glares at Caz.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
And you must be our little computer  
hacker, Casandra Ali.

CAZ  
Call me, Caz.

PRINCIPAL  
I will not! Sit down!

He glares at Latisha.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
La-tish-a Jackson.

LATISHA  
It's pronounced La-tee-sha.

PRINCIPAL  
The ringleader and a bookie from  
what I understand!

LATISHA  
I bet you're right.

PRINCIPAL  
There will never be betting on  
school property, is that clear?

Latisha looks away.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
Welcome to a new type of detention!  
I'm not wasting my time coming in  
on Christmas break for three hours  
a day from 9 AM to Noon.  
(MORE)

## PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

I've arranged work-study at a nearby bed and breakfast where you'll do dishes, change beds, and wash floors for the next five days at Mr. Abrams B&B, and you'll complete eight hours of additional Community Service at the Christmas Tree Lot or you will be expelled! Is that clear?

Bogs raises a hand with a question, but the Principal storms out in anger.

## BOGS

I was going to ask if lunch was included.

The teens laugh and poke each other on the ways out.

## EXT. ABRAMS' B&amp;B - CONTINUOUS

The Deputy races up to the house and exits the patrol car holding her large-brimmed hat over her crotch as she approaches the door.

A smiling dark-haired girl, EVA (8-10), answers the door before the deputy can knock. Eva is quick to notice the coffee stain. She turns her head.

## EVA

Dad! The Sheriff's here. She wet her pants.

Eva turns and runs into the house, as handsome BEN ABRAMS (30s) comes to the door, embarrassed.

## DEPUTY SANTOS

I'm Deputy Santos. You called about a theft?

## BEN

I'm Ben. That was my daughter, Eva. Spilled coffee, I see.

Eva races up with a smile and a kitchen towel.

Ben smiles and points the way inside.

## BEN (CONT'D)

Let's get you out of the cold and dry you off.

The Deputy accepts the towel with a smile and enters wiping her pants.

INT. ABRAMS' B&B - CONTINUOUS

The house is decked out in Christmas decorations and a Christmas tree. Garland is everywhere.

BEN

My phone said two packages were delivered late last night. I went to fetch them this morning, and they were gone.

The coffee stain remains. The Deputy sighs.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Five houses last night. Do you have security cameras?

BEN

A doorbell cam. The video won't be much help.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Why not?

BEN

The thief parks out of view, enters from the side with a box in front of him or her, puts tar pitch on the camera lens, then steals the packages.

DEPUTY SANTOS

A real pro. What were the contents?

Ben glances back at Eva, while the Deputy dabs her pants.

BEN

One was a gift. One was a thermostat repair kit for our hot water heater.

Ben eyes the coffee stain again.

BEN (CONT'D)

No hot water for washing but we can dry your pants in the drier.

DEPUTY SANTOS

I'm already embarrassed. My boy...  
friend showed the body cam incident  
to everyone at the station.

Eva's smile disappears at the word "boyfriend" and she turns  
away disappointed.

DEPUTY SANTOS (CONT'D)

Did I say something...

Ben puts a finger to his lips requesting silence. He speaks  
loudly.

BEN

Let me show you the tar pitch on  
the doorbell camera.

Ben guides the Deputy outside.

EXT. ABRAMS' B&B - CONTINUOUS

Ben points to the tar pitch and whispers.

BEN

Since her mom died three years ago,  
she'd avoided eye contact with  
every grown woman. But this past  
year, I think she looks at every  
woman as a potential mom figure.

DEPUTY SANTOS

So sorry...

BEN

You smiled at us even after having  
the coffee accident. That speaks  
volumes.

Another nondescript white van pulls up. Ben and the Deputy  
look out.

BEN (CONT'D)

Our new housecleaners. They get  
high school credit as work-study  
units.

Bogs, Latisha, and Caz exit the van while poking, pushing,  
and instigating trouble for each other. They smile briefly at  
the Deputy before smiling bigger at Ben.



LATISHA

Mr. Abrams? I'm Latisha.

(points)

That's Caz, and that's Bogs.

BEN

Your principal called.

CAZ

(laughs)

They can't call it detention anymore, so they punish us with

(uses finger quotes)

"work-study" for three hours a day for five days this week.

BOGS

Beats sitting in the cafeteria over Christmas break. Then we gotta come up with eight hours of

(uses finger quotes)

"community service" on Saturday.

DEPUTY SANTOS

(laughs)

All week? What did you do? Rob a bank?

The teens take pride in talking about their crimes.

LATISHA

I got caught gambling.

CAZ

She's a bookie. I got caught hacking the district's computer to change Bogs' grade in English Lit. He's just learning to speak American.

Caz and Latisha smile at Bogs, who is overly proud.

BOGS

I got in a fight defending my homeland.

CAZ

Against the whole football team.

LATISHA

And he won, so I won my bet, and...

The Deputy interrupts them by waving her hand.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Did you see anything suspicious while driving here? We're looking for a thief who steals packages from porches.

The teens shake their heads 'no' as they stare at the Deputy's wet pants.

BEN

Why don't you kids hop inside and my daughter, Eva, will get you started cleaning the guest rooms?

DEPUTY SANTOS

You can also help old Gus at the Christmas Tree lot if you got time.

The teens chuckle as they walk in.

CAZ

Whatever. It all pays the same.

BOGS

Nothin'.

LATISHA

(mumbles)

I bet they thought slavery was dead.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Thanks very much for your time, Mr. Abrams. We'll let you know if we find anything.

The Deputy holds out the towel.

BEN

Keep it. We've got plenty, and the cold-water wash crew is here.

Ben smiles. He and the Deputy share a quick moment.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Four more stops for me.  
(tips her hat)  
Be kind to your slaves.

The Deputy smiles and Ben laughs.

BEN

Be careful with your coffee.

Ben waves as she drives off.

Ben takes out a handkerchief and wipes the tar off the doorbell camera.

INT. ABRAMS' B&B - CONTINUOUS

Ben enters to see Eva laughing with the teens.

EVA

Without hot water, we can't have guests, but Daddy bought all this food for the holidays.

BEN

So let's put the breakfast in this bed and breakfast!

The kids all cheer as Ben leads everyone to the kitchen.

LATER

Everyone sits in front of big empty plates where remnants of egg yokes, bacon, and toast can be seen.

EVA

Caz, you didn't try my dad's peppered bacon.

CAZ

It's forbidden. I'm Muslim.

BEN

We're Jewish, but we surrender more to temptation, especially since we opened the B&B.

EVA

The smell drove us crazy. We figured God wouldn't do that to us!

Caz drools over the bacon.

CAZ

Jewish? But your B&B is filled with Christmas decorations.

BEN

Our guests like to see them, and Eva loves to get presents for every holiday: the Indian festival of lights.

CAZ

Diwali.

BEN

Hanukkah. Even Chinese New Year!

EVA

We love Chinese food.

Everyone laughs and nods in agreement.

LATISHA

Have you owned this business long?

Ben looks away sadly.

BEN

I was doing well on Wall Street,  
but when Eva's mom passed away  
three years ago, I looked for a job  
where we could be together.

CAZ

So sorry.

BEN

(looks them in the eyes)  
Never regretted it for a minute.  
Life is too short not to spend it  
with the ones you love.

BOGS

I miss my tato i mama back home.

BEN

Ukraine?

BOGS

They're refugees in Poland today.

LATISHA

His folks got him out before...

CAZ

He was lucky to have an uncle here.

Bogs looks away and forces a laugh.

BOGS

My folks will join me when they can  
afford it, but I'm the luckiest boy  
in the world. I've got two  
girlfriends.

Latisha and Caz glare at each other as Eva laughs at Bogs.

EVA

Let me know how that works out!

Ben stands to change the subject.

BEN

I don't have work for you this week, but old Gus at the Christmas tree lot could use your help according to the Deputy.

EVA

He can't see too good. He's got Cadillacs.

BEN

Cataracts. I'll sign your forms either way, to keep the principal off your backs.

LATISHA

Thanks, Mr. A. Will do!

CAZ

Can we help with the dishes?

Eva smiles and guides the teens to the door.

EVA

We have a system.

They HEAR Ben washing dishes. Eva whispers.

EVA (CONT'D)

I act too young, and Daddy washes the dishes. Keep an eye out for porch pirates. I think Daddy ordered me a new tablet computer.

CAZ

Will do, Eva.

BOGS

I'll break him in half if I see him.

Eva grabs Bogs' hand.

EVA

We shouldn't hurt anyone. Treat everyone like you want to be treated!

Eva hugs Bogs. They all smile.

BOGS

(sadly)

The real world doesn't work that way. I wish it did.

CAZ

Don't listen to Bogs! You're right, Eva!

LATISHA

(laughs)

Got that right!

They smile and laugh as they hop in the van and race off with Bogs driving.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - DAY

Old GUS WATERS (80) sits in an old wooden chair surrounded by Christmas trees. Gus wears tattered overalls, an old Army jacket, and a blue wool ski cap.

The nondescript white van driven by V drives up slowly on the far edge of the lot.

Gus glances at the van quickly, taking little note.

V gets out on the far side of the van and opens the back cargo doors. He wears dark sunglasses, a heavy coat, and black ski cap.

Gus glances over again to see (from his POV) a blurry figure step into the far edge of the lot. Gus yells.

GUS

Pick any tree you'd like.

V sings a song to the tune of "Oh Christmas Tree" which is barely audible to Gus.

V

Stole Christmas tree, stole  
Christmas tree, how simply free thy  
branches...

V carries a nice tree to his van, tosses it in the back, and shuts the back doors, which SQUEAK as they shut.

V climbs in, and drives off slowly.

Gus stands in protest.

GUS  
Hey, you! Come back here!

Gus takes out his old flip cell phone. He has trouble seeing the number pad, but dials 9-1-1.

LATER

The Deputy drives up with siren and lights. She sees Gus wave, and sees that he's okay.

She shuts off the lights and siren, and races to Gus.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Mr. Waters, are you okay?

GUS  
Somebody stole a tree. Just drove off!

Gus studies the Deputy.

GUS (CONT'D)  
I know you! Maria Santos. Class of 2010.

She hugs him.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
You were my favorite history teacher. In fact, my favorite teacher ever!

GUS  
My last year. Made me retire 'cause of my eyes.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
But not your heart!

Bogs drives the teens up in their white van and park behind the deputy's car.

GUS  
White van! That's it! That's the van that stole my tree!

The Deputy stands in disbelief as the three teens exit the van. They look dumbfounded, especially Bogs.

Gus squints his eyes, but can't see them well.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
These kids?

GUS

Now I'm not so sure. See if they  
have a tree in the back.

LATISHA

(angry)

There's no tree in the back.

The Deputy stomps over to the van and opens the back doors.

DEPUTY SANTOS

No tree.

The Deputy shuts the doors (no squeak).

GUS

Not them. Unless they switched out  
the van.

The Deputy walks back.

DEPUTY SANTOS

These kids work for Mr. Abrams  
helping at the Bed and Breakfast.

BOGS

I'm Bogs. This is Latisha and Caz.  
We got an hour left on our sentence  
today.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Mr. Waters, Gus, was my history  
teacher.

GUS

Someone just stole a tree. Maybe  
you three can keep an eye on the  
perimeter so history doesn't repeat  
itself.

BOGS

Sorry about your tree, Mr. Waters.  
Where'd it happen?

Gus points to the far edge, and Bogs heads out in that  
direction.

Caz and Latisha salute Gus and fan out in the other  
directions.

DEPUTY SANTOS

They're basically good kids, Mr.  
Waters.

(MORE)



DEPUTY SANTOS (CONT'D)

They came to help you on their own accord after I briefly mentioned you could use some help.

Bogs yells from the far edge of the tree lot, as he holds up three ten-dollar bills.

BOGS

Found some money on the ground. I guess he didn't steal the tree after all.

Bogs runs back and hands Gus the thirty dollars.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Huh? Hard to believe! Why didn't he come over and pay you himself?

Gus takes the money with a smile, but sounds suspicious.

GUS

First time that ever happened.

Latisha and Caz return to the group, staring suspiciously at Bogs.

GUS (CONT'D)

(laughs)

You kids can come back and help me anytime.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Was thirty dollars enough for the tree, Mr. Waters?

GUS

(laughs)

I would have taken twenty-five.

BOGS

No crime then?

The Deputy glances suspiciously at Bogs before smiling at Gus.

DEPUTY SANTOS

I guess not.

The Deputy hugs Gus goodbye, waves to the teens, and takes off.

Caz and Latisha laugh and call out like street vendors.

LATISHA

Get your Christmas Trees while  
they're hot!

CAZ

Get your symbol of Christmas that  
doesn't look anything like the  
olive and fig trees in Bethlehem!

Bogs scolds them.

BOGS

Hey, knock it off, you two.  
Christmas trees remind me of home!

Latisha and Caz smile compassionately at Bogs, as Gus enjoys  
his chair.

GUS

Back to work, you three. I ain't  
paying you nothin' for nothin'!

The teens laugh, shake their heads, and fan out in the lot,  
with Bogs returning to the far edge where the tree was  
stolen.

Bogs' phone BUZZES. Caller ID reads: "V."

Bogs looks around, turns away, hunches his shoulders, and  
whispers into the phone.

BOGS

What now? You said I was done...

V (O.S.)

(laughs)

While you're driving one of my  
vans, you're still working for me.

Bogs looks around, terrified.

V (V.O.)

You have to do ten deliveries a day  
for me or you'll go back to riding  
a bicycle. Got it?

Bogs ends the call with a very worried look.

He looks back to see Latisha and Caz sitting on the ground,  
mesmerized as Gus smiles and speaks to them.

Bogs returns to the group but remains standing.

GUS

I know there are more good people than bad people in the world.

CAZ

How's that, Mr. Waters?

GUS

Take the worst of times in human history, and every time, somebody comes along to set us straight.

Gus launches into a long lecture on the history of civilizations, as Latisha, Bogs, and Caz are captivated by his storytelling.

LATER

Evening approaches and Gus is still lecturing the kids, who are sitting around him like students eagerly waiting for the bell to ring.

GUS (CONT'D)

See what I'm saying?! Evil dictators and bad leaders always meet their match. But remember this:

(powerfully)

John Stuart Mill said, "Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends than that good men should look on and do nothing."

Bogs stands first, hinting to the women.

LATISHA

I bet that's right.

GUS

You bet it is!

Bogs chuckles.

BOGS

Latisha bets on everything.

Latisha glares at Bogs.

Caz stands, so Latisha stands.

CAZ

Our time is up, Mr. Waters. Latisha and I gave you our numbers.

LATISHA

Call us if you need our help.

GUS

Will do. You kids run along. I'll be fine.

BOGS

Next time, Mr. Waters.

Gus eyes Bogs and holds his finger in the air.

GUS

Something tells me it won't be the last time we see each other.

Latisha and Caz look bewildered at Gus.

The girls walk slowly to the van with Bogs between them. They whisper to Bogs.

LATISHA

What did that old man mean by that?

BOGS

How should I know?

CAZ

Odd, that's all!

LATISHA

(to Bogs)

I bet that thirty dollars you found on the ground didn't belong to the Christmas tree thief!

CAZ

That's money you could have saved to get your parents over here.

BOGS

Shut up, you two! Maybe I felt sorry for the old man.

Latisha is suspicious.

LATISHA

Uh-huh!

The girls lock elbows with Bogs, who smiles on the way to the van.

They wave to Gus as they drive off.

Gus waves back with a weak smile. His face turns to a look of concern.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - EVENING

The Deputy cruises slowly around the ski town. By her side is a town map on a clipboard with a red marker. There are ten dots on the map with the last names of the homeowners listed by the dots (e.g., Timms, Carmassi, Ortez, Newman, Assiz...) and the center dot reads, "Abrams."

She makes a radio call while staring at the map.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Dispatch, have there been any more reports of thefts by porch pirates? Over.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)

That's a wet pants negative, Maria. Over.

The Deputy hears snickers in the background.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Thanks, Jimmy. I've had enough of your childish...

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)

Hold it, Deputy. We just got a call that a suspicious white van may have been casing the estate homes by the ski resort.

The Deputy is deadly serious.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Lotta houses up there! I need backup! Over.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)

Sorry. I'm afraid our other officers are fighting real crime.

The Deputy angrily ends the radio call and speeds off.

INT. BOGS' VAN - SAME

Bogs drives slowly through the older part of the ski town. Caz rides shotgun, with Latisha in the back. They pass several houses with Christmas decorations.

LATISHA

Where did you get this van, again?

Bogs glares in the rearview window.

BOGS

I told you! It's on loan from my boss. I deliver groceries and meals from stores and restaurants to old people! I gotta do ten deliveries a day to keep using the van. You could help me, ya know!

Caz turns to Latisha angrily.

CAZ

He sends his salary back home and for refugee relief. Get off his back!

Latisha looks around the van, suspicious.

LATISHA

And the boss lets you drive it to school and have it over the holiday break for nothing?

BOGS

(defensive)

I gotta pay for the gas!

LATISHA

We'd be glad to help you make food deliveries!

Bogs grabs a clipboard off the dashboard and hands it to Latisha who studies it. The clipboard shows the orders, addresses, and three check-off boxes for home security.

BOGS

These are my stops today. We do the shopping or stop by a restaurant and deliver. Easy!

LATISHA

What are these home security boxes for?

BOGS

The boss also sells doorbell cams and home security cameras in his spare time. We drivers get an extra five bucks per delivery by doing a scouting report for him.

CAZ

So the boss knows who to sell them  
to?

BOGS

Exactly.

Latisha turns her head, unsatisfied with the answers.

BOGS (CONT'D)

Fine! Let's get to work.

Bogs' phone BUZZES with a text. He cups his phone to  
privately read the message.

BOGS (CONT'D)

Why don't we check out the  
Christmas decorations at the ski  
resort first?

Caz's and Latisha's eyes open widely as he guns the van and  
races away.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - SAME

The Deputy races around in a ritzy neighborhood of heavily  
decorated estates. She gets on the radio.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Dispatch, any more reports on the  
white van? These mountain roads all  
look the same in the dark. Over.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)

Nothing new. Your shift is over  
anyway. Over.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Just a few more...

The Deputy sees the back of a white van disappear over a hill  
in front of her. She steps on the gas.

Racing over the hill, the Deputy comes to a fork in the road  
and jams on the brakes. The car skids to a stop.

She glances at her map of red dots, taps the left side of the  
map and races down the slippery road. It's a treacherous  
drive.

INT. BOGS' VAN - SAME

Bogs drives slowly through the same ritzy neighborhood, pretending to enjoy the Christmas lights. Latisha is bored and impatient, while Caz is enjoying the ride.

LATISHA

Can we go home now?

CAZ

I think it's romantic. A magical time of the year.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - SAME

The Deputy's car slips and slides down the street. It's scary.

She is coming up to a cross street and sees a white van cruising by on the street.

She turns on the lights and siren, and races after the van.

She skids into the cross street, straightens her car out, and has the van in her sights.

INT. BOGS' VAN - SAME

Bogs acts like he doesn't see the lights or hear the siren behind them, but both Latisha and Caz hear it.

CAZ

Pull over so the cops can go around you!

LATISHA

Now! We're like accessories!

BOGS

We didn't do nothing wrong!

CAZ

Anything wrong!

Bogs pulls over and rolls down his window.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Deputy pulls in behind Bogs' and a camera automatically runs his plates.



She calmly exits her squad car and walks slowly to the van.

When she sees Bogs' face and Caz and Latisha inside the van, she turns angry. The teens are goofy and happy.

DEPUTY SANTOS

What are you three doing up here in this neighborhood?

BOGS

Looking at Christmas lights!

LATISHA

Aren't they beautiful? Did you see the blow-up snowman?

DEPUTY SANTOS

I'll ask the questions.

While the Deputy glares at Bogs, he glances into the rearview mirror to see V's white van roll through the intersection behind them.

BOGS

(apologizing)

Did I run a stop sign, turn without signaling, or enter a fancy neighborhood without permission?

CAZ

You're right. Latisha shouldn't be here!

Latisha slaps Caz's shoulder and they laugh.

The Deputy turns to look down the street, but V's van is out of sight.

She stretches her head into the van's window.

LATISHA

(angry)

Is this a legal search?

DEPUTY SANTOS

This is another area hit by the porch pirates. That gives me probable cause. Do you mind if I look in the back of your van?

Bogs happily exits and opens the back of the van. It's empty.

Latisha and Caz glare at the Deputy.

LATISHA

Uh-huh!

BOGS

Are we free to go?

DEPUTY SANTOS

I'll just be a minute while I check the run on the plates. In the meantime, pull your license and registration for me.

The Deputy returns to her car, while Bogs pulls the registration from the glove compartment.

The Deputy returns to the van.

DEPUTY SANTOS (CONT'D)

You're free to go. It doesn't help that your employer has a half-a-dozen white vans delivering groceries and meals in the area! Sorry about tonight.

The Deputy trudges back to her car.

BOGS

(sounds sincere)  
Merry Christmas!

She doesn't turn around.

DEPUTY SANTOS

You too.

Bogs pulls away slowly and drives ahead.

INT. BOGS' VAN - CONTINUOUS

Silence. Christmas decorations are on many houses. Christmas MUSIC plays on the radio.

Bogs glances to his right and into the rearview mirror to see that Latisha and Caz are glaring at him.

BOGS

What?

CAZ

You tell us. Why did you really drag us up here?

LATISHA  
Who texted you?

Bogs squirms in his seat, then finally answers in a sincere and sad way.

BOGS  
My boss wanted me to deliver meals tonight, and I snubbed him to see Christmas lights.

LATISHA  
Uh-huh!

BOGS  
I was trying to impress you both that I'm an okay guy.

Bogs looks out the window at a nicely decorated house. He sounds depressed.

BOGS (CONT'D)  
I'd like to live in one of these houses someday. Impossible, right? Driving a van for minimum wage and having to pay for the gas?

Caz leans over and kisses Bogs on the cheek. Latisha leans forward and puts her hand on his shoulder.

CAZ  
Nothing's impossible if you work hard enough.

Bogs' mood shifts to a devious one as he eyes both girls.

Latisha pulls her hand back from Bogs' shoulder.

LATISHA  
Uh-huh! Both of us? That's impossible!

CAZ  
You better make up your mind! Take me home!

LATISHA  
Me too!

Bogs shrugs like an innocent victim and they all laugh!

EXT. ABRAMS' B&B - MORNING

The Deputy knocks on the door, holding a box of donuts in the other hand.

BEN  
Come in, Deputy.

To her surprise, the door is unlocked.

INT. ABRAMS' B&B - CONTINUOUS

The Deputy enters with a puzzled look.

Ben and Eva sit on a couch viewing Ben's tablet computer.

BEN  
Good morning, Deputy. We saw you coming blocks away.

Ben stands and shows the Deputy the tablet computer.

EVA  
Surprise!  
(beat)  
I mean, no surprise.

BEN  
I installed another camera at the foot of the driveway. I cleaned the doorbell camera too.

The Deputy hands the box of donuts to Eva.

EVA  
Wow, thanks, Deputy Santos. Donuts are my favorite fruit.

Eva laughs and takes the box into the kitchen.

BEN  
(yells)  
Save some for the teens.

Deputy Santos whispers.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Do me a favor and don't tell the teens about your new camera.

BEN  
Why?

DEPUTY SANTOS

Call it an experiment. I would like to see if your new camera can differentiate between several white vans driving around this area.

BEN

And you don't want Bogs, a good guy, modifying his driving behavior so you can tell him from the bad guys.

Eva returns with a chocolate donut in her mouth.

DEPUTY SANTOS

(to Ben)

Exactly.

(to Eva)

Those donuts are an apology from me to the teens. I pulled them over by mistake last night. I hope the donuts help.

BEN

I'm sure they will.

DEPUTY SANTOS

I've got to run. I hope to capture those porch pirates soon.

The Deputy pulls out a typed list from her pocket, shaking her head sadly.

DEPUTY SANTOS (CONT'D)

I got this list of the contents of the stolen boxes from the five houses, including yours.

(looks away)

More than a few Christmases ruined.

Ben moves to look over her shoulder at the list.

BEN

There's our one Christmas present and the thermostat, but...

(sadly)

Oh, my!

DEPUTY SANTOS

I know the new TVs and computers can be re-purchased, but one family had been sent their children's photo albums and irreplaceable family heirlooms.

Eva stops eating the donut and her eyes widen.

BEN

Wheelchair parts from the V-A?  
Makes my thermostat a very minor  
issue.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Fourteen boxes total. Most were  
Christmas presents, but I worry  
about some of the other items.

Ben reads from the list.

BEN

A special oxygen tent for a  
premature baby!

Ben paces and thinks.

BEN (CONT'D)

We're driving into the city today  
to pick up that thermostat. Can we  
replace a couple of these important  
stolen items while we're there?

Eva gets excited and hugs her dad.

EVA

Like a real Santa Claus!

DEPUTY SANTOS

That would be too kind, but...

EVA

My dad says you can never be too  
kind.

They all smile and share a moment.

DEPUTY SANTOS

He's a smart man.

BEN

I could deliver them to you, and  
you can pass them on to the victims  
from an anonymous donor.

The Deputy holds Ben's hand for a moment, smiles, then turns  
to exit.

EVA

Thanks again for the donuts, Deputy  
Santos.

The Deputy turns back.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Call me, Maria. I like you two!

BEN  
Thanks, Maria.

Ben and Eva wave goodbye to the Deputy as she drives off.

Before they shut the door, they hear Bogs' van drive up.

BEN (CONT'D)  
Eva, grab the box of donuts, will  
ya? And don't mention our new  
camera.

Eva shrugs perplexed, but she races to the kitchen.

Ben leaps to the couch, grabs his tablet computer, and shoves  
it in his backpack.

The teens poke their heads in the open door to see Eva with  
the box of donuts.

BEN (CONT'D)  
Deputy Santos stopped by to leave  
you an apology.

Latisha and Caz smile but Bogs is unimpressed and stoic.

EVA  
I think Maria is nice, and the  
donuts are amazing!

BOGS  
(smiles at Eva)  
Maria, huh?

Ben hands the box of donuts to Caz and herds the teens out  
the door.

BEN  
The Deputy was extremely concerned  
about some of the items that were  
stolen by the porch pirates.

Caz is stunned.

CAZ  
Like what?

BEN  
Medical supplies for disabled  
veterans...

EVA  
(sad)  
And things to keep babies from  
dying.

Bogs turns to see Eva cringe.

LATISHA  
That's awful! I guess they can't  
see what's inside the boxes when  
they steal 'em.

Bogs looks away. Latisha, Ben, and Eva see it, but Caz  
doesn't see it.

BEN  
No work for you here today. I'll  
still sign your forms. We have to  
drive into the city and pick up a  
few things.

CAZ  
That's fire. Maybe we'll take the  
donuts and help out old Mr. Waters  
for a while.

LATISHA  
Long as he doesn't bore us with  
more history.

BOGS  
Or, I could make a few deliveries.

LATISHA  
(glares at Bogs)  
We are obligated to put in our  
three hours somewhere!

Latisha pulls Bogs toward the van.

CAZ  
Yeah, Bogs! Let's help the old man  
out!

Bogs trudges to the van, then smiles.

BOGS  
Fine by me.  
(yells)  
After we do some shredding!



LATISHA

I'm in.

CAZ

Me too!

They race out to the van.

EXT. SKI SLOPES - DAY

The group arrives in the parking lot wearing their snow gear.

BOGS

(laughs)

Aren't we supposed to be at work-study?

LATISHA

It's like playing hooky from detention.

CAZ

What if we see our teachers or the principal?

LATISHA

We'll keep our helmets on. Nobody will recognize us.

BOGS

They might recognize me from the fire moves I'm going to drop in the half-pipe.

Caz and Latisha stare at Bogs before hitting him playfully.

LATISHA

Just don't get carried down in an emergency basket!

CAZ

Or get a binding stuck in the chairlift.

LATISHA

Again!

BOGS

That was an accident!

They laugh and head to the slopes.

BEGIN MONTAGE

-- The teens are in snow clothing, and put on helmets (with shaded goggles) before hitting the slopes.

-- We see Latisha on a snowboard shredding gracefully.

-- We see Caz on skis racing down the slope.

-- We see Bogs on a snowboard in the halfpipe, wiping out in grand fashion.

-- At the bottom of the ski slope, the teens remove their helmets and take time for a snowball fight.

-- They laugh and hit each other playfully as they head back to the van.

-- They don't see V staring at them through binoculars from the parking lot.

END MONTAGE

LATISHA

That was fun, and no one was the wiser. And Mr. Abrams will sign our forms anyway!

BOGS

It's like free money, except without the money.

CAZ

I feel a little guilty.

Bogs playfully grabs her shoulders for a sarcastic warning.

BOGS

You be careful, young lady, or you'll be accused of putting the 'dull' in the word 'dull-linquents!'

Latisha and Bogs laugh immediately, then Caz catches on and laughs as they get in the van.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - NOON

The teens are back in street clothes. Donuts cheer up everyone on a cold day. Gus serves them hot chocolate.

BOGS

Donuts for lunch!

CAZ

After a couple of great runs.

(beat)

I mean, after working hard all morning at the Bed and Breakfast.

LATISHA

That Mr. Abrams is quite the slave driver! Only in America, hey, Mr. Waters?

Gus takes a big bite from a donut.

GUS

Best place on Earth, but it hasn't always been America.

Latisha rolls her eyes.

LATISHA

I feel a lecture coming on.

Gus goes on about local history as the teens are captivated.

GUS

Entire landscape was covered with trees 500 years ago. Native Americans everywhere, but I like to call 'em, the Indigenous People. They lived here ten thousand years before the first thoughts of America.

SUPER: Three hours later."

Bogs looks around and out of the corner of his eye, he sees a white van out where the first tree was stolen. It drives off.

Gus barely sees it drive off.

GUS (CONT'D)

There are a lot of white vans around.

BOGS

I hear my boss has a fleet of them to bring meals to seniors and the disabled.

Gus politely corrects Bogs.

GUS

Physically challenged or Differently abled.

BOGS

(shrugs)

I'm not mentally able enough to tell them apart, but they tip pretty good!

Everyone shakes their head, then laughs it off, patting Bogs on the back.

CAZ

Take us home, Bogs. You've had a hard day at work!

They wave goodbye to Gus and head to the van.

LATISHA

Are we still on for ice skating tonight?

BOGS

Hell, yes. It's the one thing I'm good at! But me and my team have to make deliveries first.

They all laugh.

EXT. ABRAMS' B&B - EVENING

The Deputy stops by unannounced. Ben and Eva surprise her by opening the door before she can knock.

BEN

Hi, Maria.

EVA

Won't you come in?

Ben and Eva smile at each other and at the Deputy before she smiles back and hands Ben two thank-you cards.

Ben steps back, embarrassed, but smiling.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Your gifts were anonymous, but both recipients wanted to thank you. The veteran went right to work on his wheelchair, and the mother of the premie made me promise that I would hug you. She was in tears, so here it is!

The Deputy steps up to hug Eva, then Ben. Ben's hug lasts longer and Eva smiles.

BEN  
The spirit of the holidays, right?

EVA  
I'm proud of you, Daddy! Can I go  
back to my book?

BEN  
Yes, dear, of course.

EVA  
Goodbye, Maria.  
(makes eye contact)  
Visit again soon.

The Deputy melts with a big smile, as Eva turns and exits.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Did your new security cam pick up  
anything while you were in the  
city?

BEN  
Two different white vans cruised  
our street, each with tinted  
windows.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Did you get the plates?

BEN  
I had the camera pointed too high  
today. I adjusted it so it should  
be good to go. Why do you ask?

DEPUTY SANTOS  
I stopped at the Christmas tree lot  
to give Mr. Waters a ride home, and  
he counted two white vans, but what  
he said sent chills up my spine.

BEN  
What did he say?

DEPUTY SANTOS  
He said he thinks someone is  
running a shell game with similar  
vans.

BEN  
Shell game?

DEPUTY SANTOS

You know, which walnut shell has the pea? He thinks unmarked, look-alike vans are a way of distributing the risk of getting caught. But so far, the only use of a white van in a crime has been the one Christmas tree.

BEN

But Bogs found the thirty dollars.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Old Gus said he overheard the kids talking about ice skating tonight. I may swing by and ask him again.

The Deputy locks eyes with Ben.

BEN

Good luck, Maria.

They smile.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Goodnight, Ben.

The Deputy smiles to her car. Ben waves goodbye. We see Eva's face smiling out a front window.

EXT. BOGS' VAN - SAME

Bogs has a goofy smile as he makes his deliveries throughout the ski town. Latisha and Caz sit quietly in the van.

BEGIN MONTAGE

-- HOUSE #1 Bogs parks in front of a house, grabs a dozen eggs from the passenger seat, and runs to the door with the eggs in hand. He examines the doorbell before ringing it. While he waits for a response, he looks around for security cameras. An Elderly Man (60s) reaches an arm out with a \$5-bill and exchanges it for the eggs. Bogs returns to the van and checks off "no" for "doorbell cam" or "security cameras."

-- HOUSE #2 Bogs repeats the delivery process with a MEAL from a restaurant, and takes notes. "Yes" on doorbell cam, and "No" for security cameras.

-- We see Bogs running up and back to two more houses, smiling all the while.

END MONTAGE

EXT. V'S VAN - SAME

V smiles as he drives slowly through a nice neighborhood. We see his van is filled with boxes and mail envelopes. He bursts out in song (to the tune of "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year.")

V

It's the most wonderful crime of the year. The kids will be yelling, the parent rebelling, there is no good cheer. It's the most wonderful crime of the year.

He looks down at the passenger seat where we see a map of the ski town, and a red dot blinking, indicating a van moving slowly down different street.

The red dot appears to move to the far left of the map.

V slams on the brakes, and turns around. Several boxes in the back fall over making sounds like breaking glass and metal squeaking.

V (CONT'D)

Someone quit their job a little early!

EXT. ICE RINK - NIGHT

The ice rink is lit up with Christmas lights and Christmas MUSIC plays from speakers.

Bogs, Latisha, and Caz skate and smile. They hold hands with Bogs in the middle.

CAZ

I never imagined how feeling cold outside could make you so warm inside.

Bogs and Latisha smile.

BOGS

Back home, the ice was the great escape from the troubles of the day. I miss hockey!

LATISHA

Only humans could turn such a peaceful activity into a violent war over a tiny plastic puck.

They laugh.

CAZ  
 (to Bogs)  
 Did we finish our deliveries today?

BOGS  
 We got one more to do. It's on the way home.

LATISHA  
 I hope it's not somebody's dinner?

BOGS  
 No. It's cat food.

CAZ  
 A cat's gotta eat dinner too!

BOGS  
 My boss won't care. He's pretty chill.

CUT TO:

INT. V'S VAN - SAME

V scans the ice rink with binoculars. He spots Bogs and the girls.

He takes out his phone and calls Bogs, who stops holding hands with Latisha to answer.

INTERCUT phone call.

Latisha is upset.

BOGS  
 Hello?

V  
 Did you finish your deliveries?

BOGS  
 Almost. One left. I'm doing it now.

V  
 Now?

BOGS  
 Almost now.



V  
 (calmly)  
 Are you driving there?  
 (angry, yells)  
 Or ice skating there!

BACK TO:

EXT. ICE RINK - CONTINUOUS

The girls hear V and everyone looks around in fright.

BOGS  
 Right away, Sir. I'm on my way!

Bogs ends the call as the Deputy skates up behind the teens.

V closely watches the group with his binoculars.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
 You three looked so happy out here  
 on the ice, under the stars,  
 listening to Christmas music...

Everyone is shocked to see the Deputy on ice skates.

BOGS  
 I still have one delivery to do, or  
 it sounds like I might get fired.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
 We wouldn't want that. I just had  
 one question that wouldn't wait.

Caz and Latisha defend Bogs.

CAZ  
 He needs the money to send home for  
 refugees!

LATISHA  
 Including his parents!

DEPUTY SANTOS  
 I get that. That's why I'm  
 surprised you claimed to have found  
 thirty dollars on the ground at the  
 Christmas tree lot.

BOGS  
 I though...

CAZ  
 Old Mr. Waters could use the money.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
More than your parents?

LATISHA  
He makes more money all the time  
doing his deliveries?

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Minimum wage? And buying your own  
gas, I bet.

Bogs shakes his head 'yes.'

DISPATCH OFFICER  
Maybe I should have a word with  
this boss of yours.

BOGS  
Look, Deputy. I need the job. My  
uncle charges me rent, and for  
food.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
I just wanted you to be honest with  
me.

Bogs flails his arms. In the background, we see V's  
binoculars watching.

BOGS  
Okay, it was my thirty bucks. I  
didn't want old Gus to suffer.

The Deputy smiles.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
I'd still like to meet this boss of  
yours...

INT. V'S VAN - SAME

V slams the binoculars down on the seat next to him.

V  
That sheriff looked awfully happy.  
(angry)  
I wonder if he ratted me out!

V slowly drives off.

EXT. ICE RINK - CONTINUOUS

The Deputy skates away.

Bogs wipes his fingers across his forehead.

BOGS

Whew!

Caz and Latisha glare at Bogs.

CAZ

How did your boss know you were at  
the ice rink?

LATISHA

Did you tell him?

BOGS

Must have drove by and saw me!

Latisha and Caz look around and nod 'yes' like it is possible.

CAZ

Come on. We'll help with your last  
delivery.

They skate away.

INT. BOGS' VAN - NIGHT

Bogs drives through the ski town, while Caz maps the address. Latisha and Caz sound unconvincing.

LATISHA

It's good you deliver needed  
products to people in need.

CAZ

And it's good you send some of your  
wages to help refugees.

Bogs glances at them.

BOGS

I feel a big but coming on!

LATISHA

But there is no office address on  
your forms.

CAZ

Or contact information to the guy  
you call V.

BOGS

I think his name's Vincent,  
Pronounced Vin-sent.

LATISHA

We know how it's pronounced. What's  
his last name?

BOGS

I dunno.

CAZ

Where's he live?

BOGS

I dunno.

LATISHA

How did you get the van?

BOGS

He left it at my house after I  
applied for the job on Craig's  
List.

(sighs a relief)

Thank God we're at the house.

He stops, grabs the cat food, and races to the door with a  
huge smile on his face. He gets paid a few bucks and runs  
back to the van with a sad face.

He gets in.

BOGS (CONT'D)

No tip. The cat missed his dinner.

CAZ

I told you!

They laugh, as Bogs fills out the form. He checks 'no' for a  
doorbell cam and security camera while Latisha looks on.

BOGS

Done.

LATISHA

How do you send V the forms?

BOGS

I take a photo of the form and text it. I get \$5 extra per checkmark about \$30 extra per night to send home.

CAZ

How does he pay you?

BOGS

He brings an envelope of cash to my house. Well, to our mailbox.

LATISHA

No taxes or social security taken out?

BOGS

That's the beauty of it. I get it all!

Bogs laughs as he drives off. Latisha looks worried, but Caz is satisfied with the answers.

CAZ

You must be making a killing.

LATISHA

(laughing, pushes Bogs)  
A killing? Yeah, right!

Bogs turns up the Christmas music and drives on.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - NIGHT

The Deputy cruises through a nicely decorated neighborhood, when she gets a radio message from her boyfriend on dispatch duty.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)

Deputy Santos, are you there? Over.

She pulls over to answer the call.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Very formal for this late at night, Jimmy. Go ahead.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)

What are you doing? You're supposed to be off duty! You're never home anymore! You never call! This is... over.

Deputy Santos gets angry.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
You're breaking up with me over the  
police radio?!

The Deputy HEARS chuckling and giggling in the background at the station.

DISPATCH OFFICER (V.O.)  
Ummm. You forgot to say 'over'.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Oh, this is over, Jimmy!  
(yells)  
OVER!

She ends the call, shakes her head in disbelief, and drives on.

DEPUTY SANTOS (CONT'D)  
Idiot!

EXT. BOGS' STREET - NIGHT

Caz and Latisha are let off in the middle of the street in a lower-class neighborhood. Leafless trees line the street. Bogs rolls down the window and yells.

BOGS  
Pick you up tomorrow morning. Same  
time.

CAZ  
Don't be late!

LATISHA  
Don't forget your lunch next time.

Bogs laughs, and races off. Just two houses down the street, he slams on the brakes and skids to a stop in front of his uncle's house.

Caz whispers to Latisha.

CAZ  
Such an idiot.

Bogs takes an envelope out of his mailbox, slaps it happily in his hands, and waves to the girls before disappearing into the house.

LATISHA

But he's our idiot. Still,  
something ain't right!

CAZ

His boss, V, is very demanding.

LATISHA

And, why all the household security  
questions? He's up to something.

CAZ

You think Bogs knows?

LATISHA

I don't know.

Silence.

Caz pushes Latisha.

CAZ

What don't you know?

Latisha pushes Caz back.

LATISHA

He might be getting himself in  
trouble.

Caz pushes Latisha.

CAZ

None of our business!

Latisha pushes Caz back.

LATISHA

It might be if he's involved with  
all those porch pirates!

Caz freezes, and finally understands Latisha. She whispers.

CAZ

You think the porch pirates are  
using the information on who don't  
have home security cameras...

Latisha nods her head, 'yes' with a chuckle.

CAZ (CONT'D)

Bogs wouldn't do anything illegal!

LATISHA

That he knows of! But it's Bogs,  
not Einstein!  
(worried)  
We gotta tell him!

Caz looks terrified.

CAZ

And maybe the Deputy!

Latisha grabs Caz by the arms and turns semi-serious.

LATISHA

No! Bogs can't go to jail, or he'll  
never get his parents over here!  
They'll deport him.

CAZ

What are we gonna do?

LATISHA

He's gonna quit his job tomorrow!

They look each other in the eyes before trudging to houses on  
opposite sides of the street.

Latisha's house has few Christmas lights. Caz's house has  
none.

EXT. V'S GARAGE - NIGHT

V backs up his van to a garage on a dimly lit street.

V sings the Christmas song, "Deck the Halls" with modified  
lyrics as he works.

V

Deck the halls with people's  
presents,  
Fa la la la la la la la la,  
I'm the King and they're the  
peasants,  
Fa la la la la la la la la,  
What I do may seem improper,  
Fa la la la la la la la la,  
But I was born to be a robber,  
Fa la la la la la la la la.

He opens the garage door with a remote, exits the van, and  
opens one back door of the van with a SQUEAK.



He puts a finger to his lips to try to keep the squeak quiet, but the opening of the second door makes a louder SQUEAK.

He looks around and sees nothing.

He unloads a van full of boxes into the garage, which is already half-full of boxes.

He sees that the side door to the garage has a window shade that he left open. He closes the shade, but doesn't notice the door is unlocked.

He returns to the van, shuts the doors with a SQUEAK, then strolls to the front door.

V (CONT'D)  
Fa la la la la la la la la.

EXT. ABRAMS' B&B - NIGHT

The Deputy pulls to a stop, exits her car, and pulls out a notebook as she approaches the front door.

Again, Ben opens the door before she can knock, startling her.

BEN  
Hi, Maria.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
That freaks me out every time. You opening the door before I knock.  
(beat)  
You called the station?

BEN  
I have some video of white vans I'd like you to see. I told the Dispatch Office it could wait 'til morning.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Huh. He didn't pass that along.  
Sorry.

BEN  
Come on in. I'll put on tea.

The Deputy smiles and steps in.

INT. ABRAMS' B&B - CONTINUOUS

Ben guides her to the long kitchen table.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Is Eva asleep?

BEN  
(laughs)  
If she's not reading by flashlight  
under the covers.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
I did that a lot.

Ben delivers two cups of tea and grabs his tablet computer,  
which he fidgets with looking for video files.

BEN  
I think I have two license plates  
too.

Ben shows the Deputy a video of one van cruising slowly up  
his dark street. He pauses it when there is a good view of  
the license plate.

The Deputy writes down the plate number.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
This is very helpful. Thanks.

Ben sets up another video.

BEN  
This is that same van coming down  
the hill five minutes later.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Same plates. You're right.

BEN  
There aren't too many homes up our  
street.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
So if someone reports a porch  
pirate up there tomorrow, that  
might help.

BEN  
The second van is more interesting.

Ben pulls up the video.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Why's that?

BEN  
It went up the street two hours ago.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
And?

BEN  
Never came back down. It's not a through road, so the driver may live up there.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Brilliant. Can I get the plate?

BEN  
Not really. It's covered with mud.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Can you send those videos to me? I know some geeks that can work magic with bad photos and video.

She sips her tea and smiles at Ben.

BEN  
You bet. I still have your card.

The Deputy takes another sip of tea, then stands.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
I should be going. Long day.

BEN  
I'm sorry.

The Deputy gets up to leave then turns, with a grin.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
My immature boyfriend, the Dispatcher, dumped me over the police radio.  
(laughs)  
Pretty funny, actually.

Ben is compassionate.

BEN  
Maybe a funny story someday.

DEPUTY SANTOS

No. It's funny already. He was a jerk! Goodnight, Ben.

BEN

Goodnight, Maria.

She laughs as she exits.

Ben looks down the hallway to see Eva's door is open one inch. He watches as the door closes and he hears it CLICK shut.

Ben smiles.

BEN (CONT'D)

Goodnight, Eva! Again.

EXT. BOGS' STREET - MORNING

Latisha and Caz stand on the sidewalk beside a tree waiting for Bogs. Like clockwork, he exits his house with a smile a few doors up, gets in his van, and RACES to the girls.

He slams on the brakes. The girls glare at him, and don't get in the van. Bogs grins.

BOGS

Come on! We're gonna be late for work... or non-work... whatever!

Caz opens the passenger-side door to hear Christmas music.

CAZ

We're not getting in!

LATISHA

We need to talk!

Bogs is stunned.

BOGS

It's about the two girlfriends thing, isn't it?

CAZ

Don't flatter yourself.

LATISHA

It's about you getting taken advantage of. Get out!

Bogs is defensive.

BOGS  
Nobody's taking...

CAZ  
Get out!

Bogs shuts off the van, gets out, and trudges to the girls with an innocent look.

BOGS  
What did I do?

CAZ  
Think about it. You get a job and a free van a few weeks before Christmas.

LATISHA  
The busiest package delivery season of all.

BOGS  
Lucky to get a job...

LATISHA  
(yells, points to the van)  
What if your meals-on-wheels gig is a cover?!

CAZ  
Which you could have done in a fuel-efficient compact car!

BOGS  
What are you saying?

Latisha and Caz are frustrated with Bogs and pace angrily.

BOGS (CONT'D)  
I just deliver food to old...

LATISHA  
And collect valuable information on the security systems...

CAZ  
Or lack thereof...

LATISHA  
That could be used or sold to porch pirates after much bigger money!

CAZ  
(yells)  
And ruining several different  
holidays for dozens of kids and  
families!

Bogs freezes. His eyes open widely.

BOGS  
You think...?

LATISHA  
We think you gotta quit your job!

CAZ  
Turn in the van.

LATISHA  
And tell the Deputy everything you  
know.

BOGS  
(yells)  
I don't know nothin'! Besides, I  
can't say nothing or I'll go to  
jail and they'll deport me.

Silence.

Caz moves in to hug Bogs, but Latisha holds her back.

CAZ  
That's a problem.

LATISHA  
Did you ever meet your boss? Do you  
know his full name and address? Do  
you know what kind of car he  
drives?

Bogs eyes open wider. He's speechless.

CAZ  
We didn't think so!

BOGS  
I got his cell phone number.

LATISHA  
(laughs)  
It's probably a burner phone.  
Untraceable! You never see this  
guy. He pays you in cash.

CAZ

He knows where you are all the time, but you have no idea where he is! Doesn't all this sound suspicious to you?

Bogs looks down, humiliated.

Latisha has an epiphany and snaps her fingers.

LATISHA

Brilliant observation, Caz. How does his boss seem to know his location all the time? G-P-S!

Latisha leaps to the front of the van and starts searching it.

Caz opens the side door and looks high and low.

BOGS

What are you looking for?

LATISHA

A GPS transmitter.

CAZ

Like parents put in their teenagers' cars.

LATISHA

Rental car companies use them too.

BOGS

What do they look like?

LATISHA

Never seen one.

CAZ

Me either.

Bogs opens up the back of the van, and he looks at the undercarriage. He feels around, and finds the small transmitting device.

BOGS

Ah-ha!

He pulls it off and examines it with the girls.

Bogs puts it on the street and lifts a foot as if to crush it.

Latisha stops him.

LATISHA  
Wait. That could be useful!

BOGS  
How?

LATISHA  
I don't know, yet!

BOGS  
The thing you're forgetting is that  
my boss might have a perfectly  
reasonable explanation...

Bogs' phone RINGS with caller ID reading, "V."

He lets it ring. Caz and Latisha move close.

CAZ  
Answer it!

Bogs puts a finger to his lips for the girls to remain  
silent. He answers it, and everyone can hear V.

BOGS  
Hello?

V (O.S.)  
You're fired! Leave the keys in the  
van wherever it is and I'll pick it  
up later tonight or tomorrow.

Bogs, Caz, and Latisha open their eyes widely.

BOGS  
Fired?

V (O.S.)  
That's right, fired! And if you  
drive that van anywhere, I'll  
report it stolen, the cops will  
pick you up and take you straight  
to jail!

CLICK.

Everyone is stunned. They collapse in despair and sit on the  
curb under a leafless tree.



INT. ABRAMS' B&B - DAY

Eva has Christmas wrapping paper, scissors, tape, and a packing box on the big kitchen table. She's just finishing wrapping up a FROZEN TROUT.

Ben walks in surprised to see the operation underway.

BEN  
(laughs)  
Is that for me?

Eva giggles.

EVA  
No, Dad. I'm making this special  
for the porch pirates.

Ben is more surprised.

BEN  
That's not very Christmas-like.

Eva acts innocently.

EVA  
Oh, I'm not going to give it to  
them. They're going to steal it!

Ben laughs.

BEN  
So, you're setting a trap!

Eva is proud of herself.

EVA  
Those thieves are ruining a lot of  
Christmases for kids all over this  
town. I don't get mad. I get even!

Ben chuckles.

BEN  
I'll print you out a realistic  
shipping label to help you out.

They HEAR a knock on the door. Ben heads to the door.

EVA  
It's Maria.

BEN  
How do you know?

EVA

'Cause I'm doing something wrong.

Ben answers the door with a smile. It is the Deputy.

BEN

Come in, Maria.

DEPUTY SANTOS

I just stopped by to warn you that more packages were reported stolen in your neighborhood.

Ben whispers to the Deputy.

BEN

That's why Eva's setting a trap.

The Deputy enters and follows Ben to the kitchen.

EVA

Are you here to arrest me?

DEPUTY SANTOS

For wrapping presents.

EVA

It's a frozen fish my dad caught last summer and he froze it until he caught a second one for me.

BEN

And who knows how long could that could take.

EVA

Exactly. So I'm using it to teach the porch pirates a lesson.

DEPUTY SANTOS

I see. So, you wrap the frozen fish in a nice box. They steal it, and one or two days later it starts to stink to high heaven!

(laughs)

Brilliant! And maybe your dad can catch them on video.

Ben turns serious to the Deputy.

BEN

Any closer to finding them?

DEPUTY SANTOS

They're very smart. They only hit houses without security cameras. But, we're tracing down a few leads.

(beat)

I also came to tell you that tonight is old Gus Water's Tree Lighting Ceremony at his Christmas tree lot. Free hot chocolate. Christmas carols. And he donates all tree sales to charity.

BEN

Can we bring anything?

DEPUTY SANTOS

Ornaments for the tree Gus donates to the children's ward at the hospital.

(warns Eva)

No frozen fish ornaments!

Everyone laughs.

The Deputy exits.

EXT. BOGS' STREET - DAY

Latisha and Caz pace while Bogs sits by the van under a leafless tree.

LATISHA

Suppose this is all connected.

BOGS

What?

CAZ

(disgusted with Bogs)

Your old job! The boss that fired you.

LATISHA

You were getting too close!

BOGS

I was?

CAZ

He probably hired you because you were an immigrant and wouldn't go to the police!

BOGS

He did ask me once if I know other recent immigrants. He said he didn't care if they were illegals.

LATISHA

(upset with Bogs)

That didn't raise a red flag?!

BOGS

I needed the job!

LATISHA

It's V, I'm sure of it!

CAZ

Me too! What do we do?

LATISHA

We hunt him down! Find out where he's been storing his stolen loot, and call the Sheriff.

BOGS

On our bicycles?

LATISHA

Nope. With his van.

Latisha grabs the GPS-locator device and puts it in the tree above them.

CAZ

Ha! He'll never know we moved his van! So he won't report it stolen.

LATISHA

We'll return it before he comes for it tonight or tomorrow morning.

The mood is gloomy among the teens, when Latisha perks up.

LATISHA (CONT'D)

But first, take me to an electronics store.

BOGS

What for?

LATISHA

We're going to buy a GPS transmitter like V uses. Exactly like V uses.

CAZ  
Which we can attach to his van!

BOGS  
If we can find it.

LATISHA  
Then it will lead us to his cache  
of stolen boxes.

CAZ  
And we can call the Deputy!

Bogs jumps up excited.

BOGS  
I'll drive! Let's catch us a  
pirate!

They RACE off. We see the tracking device in the tree.

INT. BOGS' VAN - DAY

They drive slowly through town.

LATISHA  
We need to check all the places we  
know V has been.

CAZ  
We know he stole boxes from the  
Abrams.

BOGS  
Plus, we have to tell them we're  
not coming to work... or to eat...  
today.

LATISHA  
V was also at the Christmas tree  
lot.

CAZ  
And the ice rink.

LATISHA  
And wherever he hired you and gave  
you the van.

Bogs looks away ashamed.

BOGS

He left the van for me at my house,  
keys were in it, and called me on  
the phone with my work deliveries  
for the day.

Caz hits Bogs on his shoulder.

CAZ

And none of this sounded suspicious  
to you?

BOGS

I learned my lesson, okay?

They drive to the Abrams' house first.

EXT. ABRAMS' B&B - CONTINUOUS

Bogs pulls up to the house and they all get out. They see a  
nice packing box outside the door.

Latisha and Caz ring the doorbell, while Bogs instinctively  
picks up the box.

Eva answers and immediately takes the box from Bogs and puts  
it down.

EVA

That's my bait for the porch  
pirates. Come on in. You're late  
for breakfast.

LATISHA

We can't stay, we're out to catch  
the porch pirates ourselves.

CAZ

Is your dad here?

EVA

Doing dishes. I'd help, but...

BOGS

(laughs)  
We know. He's gotta system.

Ben yells from the kitchen.

BEN

Leftover bacon in the oven. Toast  
on the table.

The teens fly to the kitchen.

LATISHA  
We can't stay, Mr. A.

CAZ  
We're looking for Bogs' boss, V.

BOGS  
We think he gives house security  
information to the porch pirates.

Latisha and Caz shake their heads in disgust. Bogs is already eating bacon and toast.

LATISHA  
He is the porch pirate.

CAZ  
And the Christmas tree thief.

BEN  
Accusations are dangerous. You need  
proof!

BOGS  
We're out to get it!

BEN  
Better make sandwiches first.

EVA  
And tonight's the tree lighting  
ceremony at Mr. Water's tree lot.

LATISHA  
We never miss it, but we have  
things to do first!

CAZ  
Like find V!

BOGS  
Leave it to us!

The teens push each other around laughing as they grab bacon and toast and race out.

INT. BOGS' VAN - AFTERNOON

SERIES OF SHOTS -- The teens drive around aimlessly through neighborhoods, past the ice rink, and through town.

They get more depressed as they drive, but they keep pushing and hitting each other, finding time to laugh.

BOGS

This is pointless. He probably only works nights.

LATISHA

You might be right.

CAZ

(to Bogs)

It would be a first!

They hit each other in good fun as they drive by the far edge of Mr. Waters' Christmas tree lot.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - SAME

Gus sets up a table with a sign that reads, "Annual Christmas Eve Tree Lighting Ceremony."

Out of the corner of his eye, he sees a blurry image of Bogs' white van.

He squints and stares to get a better view of the van, but it's still blurry.

Bogs smiles and waves and yells to Gus as he drives.

BOGS

See you tonight!

Gus takes out his phone to call 9-1-1.

EXT. BOGS' STREET - DUSK

Bogs parks next to the tree with the GPS device in it, and the teens exit the car in a sad mood. Bogs tosses the keys on the front seat and slams the door.

Latisha puts their new GPS device in the pocket of her sweatshirt. Bogs is sad.

Caz grabs V's GPS device from the tree and returns it to the van's undercarriage.

They are about to walk to their houses when the Deputy drives up with lights and siren.

The teens freeze with puzzled looks, and the Deputy shuts off the siren and lights.



DEPUTY SANTOS  
Hold it right there.

The Deputy sees the teens are in a sad mood.

DEPUTY SANTOS (CONT'D)  
You all look like you've been  
punched in the gut!

LATISHA  
Feel like it too.

CAZ  
Things didn't work out for us  
today.

BOGS  
(chin drops)  
We wanted to be heroes, and we  
became triple zeroes.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Let me guess. You tried to catch  
the porch pirates by yourselves and  
came up short.

The sad expressions on the teens' faces say it all. Their  
faces drop.

DEPUTY SANTOS (CONT'D)  
You're in a little trouble  
yourselves. I spoke with a Mr.  
Vincent Roberts this afternoon.

The teens look up, acting surprised.

BOGS  
You talked to V?

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Just over the phone. He's coming  
down to the station tomorrow  
afternoon. He said he fired you  
because he thought you and your  
friends were porch pirates.

The teens are angry.

BOGS  
What?

LATISHA  
That liar!

CAZ

It's him.

DEPUTY SANTOS

He won't be pressing charges until tomorrow. I felt I had to warn you.

CAZ

He's lying! Want to check our houses.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Already did an hour ago. This van wasn't here. Mr. Roberts reported it stolen.

LATISHA

Check his GPS device. It will say this van has been here all day.

Deputy Santos glances up in the tree where the GPS device was placed.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Ben and Eva Abrams saw you earlier with the van at their house. Security video may or may not confirm that. I think Old Gus saw you at the Christmas Tree lot, but we can't trust his eyes. I may or may not have seen you around the ice rink this afternoon.

The teens are silent.

LATISHA

We aren't your porch pirates.

DEPUTY SANTOS

I know that. But Mr. Roberts claims he has photos you texted him of data sheets in your handwriting with scouting reports on security systems of the homes you delivered to.

Bogs is furious.

BOGS

I've been played!

DEPUTY SANTOS

I guessed that. When he comes in tomorrow we'll have a little talk about his business license, payroll deductions, and tax collection. We may be able to get him on a few things, but the address he gave me was bogus, and I bet he's already skipped town. He leased two identical vans under an assumed name, Mr. Bogdan Shevchenko.

Bogs' eyes open up widely.

BOGS

That's me!

Caz and Latisha hook elbows with him to keep him steady.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Relax, Bogs. A rental company can't lease vehicles to someone under twenty-five. I know he set you up!

LATISHA

What do we do know?

DEPUTY SANTOS

Go enjoy the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony with Mr. Waters and the Abrams. I'll be along later after I check a few things out. We'll talk about the rest of the issues tomorrow.

LATISHA

Christmas Day?

DEPUTY SANTOS

Sorry. I need to wrap this up and send condolences to everyone who had packages stolen. We didn't recover a single one!

(stern warning)

In the meantime, don't you three do anything stupid!

The teens look as gloomy as ever. They collapse to the curb as the Deputy races away.

BOGS

Worst Christmas ever.

CAZ  
 We don't celebrate Christmas, but I  
 agree!

Latisha stares at the poor display of Christmas lights on her house and hangs her head.

LATISHA  
 We could have done more.

The teens look over to Latisha's house to see the wimpy strands of Christmas lights go out.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - NIGHT

Twenty Townspeople (various types; half of them children) enter the tree lot to see a modest-sized tree in the center of the lot. We HEAR Christmas music and old Gus wears a bright red sweater and greets each of them.

Each of the adults pulls out Christmas ornaments from their coat pockets and begins to decorate the tree. It doesn't look like much at first, but it improves throughout the night.

The kids line up for hot chocolate with marshmallows served by Latisha and Caz, who have gloomy faces.

Ben and Eva arrive in festive holiday sweaters. Gus meets them.

GUS  
 Glad you could make it. Ben, didn't  
 you wear that awful sweater last  
 year?

BEN  
 (laughs)  
 And the year before...

EVA  
 And the year before that...

GUS  
 Eva, why don't you grab some hot  
 chocolate?

Ben migrates to the Christmas Tree to hang a few ornaments he brought.

Eva walks directly to Latisha and Caz, seeing their gloomy faces.

EVA

Do the porch pirates got you down too?!

LATISHA

You could say that!

CAZ

We feel sorrier for Bogs. We think he got played by the main pirate.

EVA

(smiles)

That's why I set a trap.

Latisha and Caz move in close.

CAZ

What do you mean you set a trap?

EVA

I wrapped a frozen fish in a box and set it outside for the porch pirates to steal. When that fish thaws... it will stink to high heaven!

Latisha has an epiphany and takes out the GPS device from her sweatshirt pocket.

LATISHA

Brilliant!

EVA

That's what Maria said.

LATISHA

We couldn't think of a way to get this tracking device in the pirate's van. What if we put it in your package?

CAZ

Brilliant!

EVA

Why didn't I think of that?

(beat)

Where is Bogs?

CAZ

Moping under a tree by our houses. Let's just say, he wasn't in the Christmas spirit.

They see a white van RACING their direction. It's Bogs! He slams on the brakes, exits the van, and marches up to the center Christmas tree and puts on three ornaments.

Gus sees this and pats him on the back.

BOGS

I'm sorry if I caused you any trouble or concern, Mr. Waters!

GUS

No apologies are necessary at Christmas, Bogs.

Bogs hugs Gus, then sees Latisha, Caz and Eva waving him to hurry over to them.

Bogs ends the hug abruptly.

BOGS

Sorry, it's my girlfriends.

Gus turns to see the girls and laughs, as Bogs leaps to them.

CAZ

Good! You brought the van!

Bogs has a goofy grin.

BOGS

I figured I was renting it, so I may as well keep looking for V.

Latisha holds out the GPS device.

LATISHA

We have a better idea, come on!

Ben wanders over to the group.

EVA

Wait! You gotta take me to help you with the present 'cause you'll be on video, and it has to look like you got permission.

BEN

She's right.

(glares at Bogs)

But you better be careful driving with my most precious cargo!

EVA

It's only a few blocks away, Dad.  
And you have to serve hot  
chocolate.

BEN

I know. Come right back here, okay?

LATISHA

We'll be careful.

The four kids run to the van and buckle in.

As Bogs starts the van, they see V in his van cruising the far side of the Christmas tree lot.

LATISHA (CONT'D)

That's gotta be V.

BOGS

Trying to steal another Christmas  
tree?

CAZ

(angry with Bogs)  
He's seeing the crowd getting  
bigger. They'll be nobody at home  
guarding all the boxes arriving on  
the busiest shipping day of the  
year!

Bogs rolls his eyes.

BOGS

I knew that!

EVA

We gotta beat him to my house.  
(yells)  
Bogs, step on it!

Bogs races away, which Ben and Gus see.

INT. BOGS' VAN - CONTINUOUS

Bogs races down one street while V drives slowly on a parallel street that is two streets down.

EVA

Take a sharp right at this alley.  
Shortcut!

Bogs takes a sharp right, and everyone sways.

Bogs drives fast (too fast) through the alley.

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

V drives slowly on a parallel street but stops to pirate two boxes outside a dark house.

EXT. ABRAMS' B&B - CONTINUOUS

Bogs slams on the brakes and the girls RACE to the box at the front door.

EVA  
Open it gently so they can't tell  
it was opened.

Latisha turns on the GPS tracking device and inserts it into the box.

CAZ  
Quick! We gotta get out of here.

LATISHA  
I'm working as fast as I can.

Eva looks into the doorbell.

EVA  
Hi, Dad. We're adding something to  
my stinky fish trap.

They finish and race back to the van.

Bogs RACES away with everyone looking for V in the other white van.

INT. BOGS' VAN - CONTINUOUS

Latisha panics.

LATISHA  
Bogs, please tell me you put the  
GPS locator for this van back in  
the tree on our street!

BOGS  
(laughs)  
Heck yeah! I'm no dummy!

They all laugh and pat Bogs on the back.



CAZ

Bogs, drive slowly back to the tree lot, but park on a side street so no one sees your van.

BOGS

Good call.

EVA

Remember you got precious cargo!

They laugh and high-five Eva.

Latisha checks the GPS-tracker App on her phone.

She sees a solid red dot at the Abrams' house.

LATISHA

We've got a signal.

EVA

Let's hope he takes the bait.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - LATER

Bog, Latisha, Caz, and Eva arrive back to hear loud happy Christmas music, with dancing, and singing. The Christmas tree is filling up with ornaments, and several more Townsfolk (various ages and types) have arrived.

In front of them all stands Deputy Maria Santos who glares at Bogs and the girls. Ben is next to Maria.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Mr. Shevchenko, I hope you're not driving that van!

BOGS

Ah, come on, Deputy. It's my last night of freedom!

LATISHA

And Christmas Eve!

CAZ

And it's for a good cause. Believe us.

EVA

And he drives very safe, for a boy!

The Deputy stares for a moment, then laughs, but the kids still look worried.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Ben, told me that you just had to  
smell Eva's fishy bait box for  
yourselves.

The kids look relieved.

Ben looks away from the Deputy.

DEPUTY SANTOS (CONT'D)

We thought it was pretty funny too.

Latisha sees Ben wink at her, then look away.

LATISHA

We just had to see it.

BOGS

And smell it for ourselves.

CAZ

Teaching those porch pirates a  
lesson.

EVA

(chuckles)

Maybe it wasn't a kindness at  
Christmas, but it is kinda funny.

The kids laugh nervously.

BEN

I just hope it's gone by morning  
before it really starts to smell.

The teens playfully push Eva around like one of the gang.

The party rolls on.

Latisha checks her phone frequently and shakes her head, 'no'  
to the other teens and to Eva.

V's van cruises by the far side of the tree lot again. This  
time, the Deputy spots him.

V spots the Deputy and peels away. The Deputy glares in V's  
direction.

DEPUTY SANTOS

I got you now!

The Deputy runs to her car and RACES after V.

Latisha stares at her phone with a worried look.

She sees no movement of the red dot.

LATISHA

He may never take the bait if the  
Deputy's after him.

Everyone stares at Latisha's phone with a sad look.

INT. V'S VAN - CONTINUOUS

V drives frantically down the street.

He hears the Deputy's siren getting closer.

He sees the same alley shortcut that Bogs took earlier, and  
turns into it, and shuts off the motor and lights.

He ducks his head and adjusts the rearview mirror just in  
time to see the Deputy's car (lights and siren) pass by.

He wipes the sweat from his brow.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - LATER

The Deputy trudges up to the group at the tree lot party.

DEPUTY SANTOS

He got away!

The teens, Ben, and Eva try to hide their happiness, and look  
away, but the Deputy senses something is up.

The Deputy glares at the kids.

DEPUTY SANTOS (CONT'D)

(to the teens)

But I'm serious. You three...

(to Eva)

You four...

(turns to Ben)

You five better stay out of trouble  
tonight!

Gus sees what's going on and guides the Deputy to the  
Christmas tree.

GUS

Now, Deputy Santos, if we've  
learned anything from the history  
of Christmas Eve, we know it's okay  
to expect miracles.

Latisha's phone BEEPS, and she quickly puts it behind her back where the other teens can see the red dot blinking and moving.

Bogs gets Eva's attention by putting a finger in his mouth like hooking a fish.

Eva gives Bogs an "okay" sign, smiles, then tugs on her dad's sleeve to whisper in his ear.

Ben and Eva gather behind Gus and the Deputy to act as cover.

Ben turns to see the teens slowly back up to the edge of the tree lot before turning and racing away.

INT. BOGS' VAN - NIGHT

The teens are excited and on the chase. Bogs drives, Latisha rides shotgun staring at the GPS App on her phone, and Caz looks on from the backseat.

LATISHA

He's four blocks away and making frequent stops.

CAZ

Stealing more packages, and why not? Everyone is at the tree lot.

BOGS

Let's ram his van!

She slaps Bogs' arm.

LATISHA

No! We have to find where he hid all the other packages.

Bogs pretends his arm is sore.

BOGS

Ow! Then we ram his van?

CAZ

Then we call in the Deputy!

LATISHA

Slow down, Bogs. We can't let him see us.

INT. V'S VAN - SAME

V drives slowly down the street looking for packages. He sings a Christmas song.

V  
 Dashing through the snow,  
 In a large white Chevrolet,  
 O'er the streets we go,  
 Stealing all the way.  
 Bells on doorbells ring,  
 Making spirits bright  
 What fun it is to ride and sing,  
 Porch-Pirating tonight, oh!

He stops singing and SNIFFS the air in his van and smells something awful. He glares back suspiciously at the packages.

He sniffs his underarm and shakes his head 'no,' and continues singing.

V (CONT'D)  
 Jingle Bells, something smells,  
 Christmas on the way,  
 Oh, what fun it is to ride  
 In a stinky Chevrolet, hey!

V SNIFFS the air again, and glares back at the packages.

V (CONT'D)  
 Maybe you're ripe. We're getting  
 pretty full. I'd better drop you  
 off at the garage.  
 (beat)  
 We'll be leaving town tomorrow  
 anyway!

V drives on toward his garage and house.

INT. BOGS' VAN - CONTINUOUS

Bogs waits for directions.

LATISHA  
 He's on the move.

CAZ  
 And he's driving fast.

LATISHA  
 And not stopping.

Bogs steps on the gas, and Latisha slaps his arm again.

LATISHA (CONT'D)  
Remember, we have to wait to see  
where he stops.

CAZ  
(to Bogs)  
Driving down his street would be a  
dead giveaway!

They follow V from a distance.

EXT. V'S GARAGE - NIGHT

V's van is backed up on the driveway by his garage.

We SEE Latisha with binoculars well down the dark street.

She takes a video of V unloading packages into the garage.

She turns and runs down a dark street to the Bogs' van and quietly climbs in.

EXT. BOGS' VAN - NIGHT

She shows Bogs and Caz the video.

LATISHA  
We got him. Address. Van. Unloading  
stolen packages! The works.

CAZ  
Do we call the Deputy?!

BOGS  
Or ram the van so he can't get  
away?

Latisha pauses.

LATISHA  
If we call the Sheriff's Office,  
they'll come and arrest him, but  
all those packages will become  
evidence.

Caz and Bogs shake their heads in agreement.

CAZ  
For who knows how long?

Bogs is tearing up.

BOGS

And Eva won't get her new Tablet  
Computer from her dad tomorrow  
morning.

Caz and Latisha comfort Bogs for a second, then start hitting  
him playfully.

LATISHA

We can't let that happen! We'll  
steal them back and deliver them  
tonight.

BOGS

(perplexed)  
What? How?

CAZ

The address labels are still on the  
packages.

BOGS

That'll take all night! What if V  
catches us?

LATISHA

We'll find Eva's stinky fish box,  
and attach the GPD device to his  
van.

CAZ

We'll know where he is all night.

BOGS

We'll be like the Three Wise Men  
bringing gifts... except the two of  
you aren't, you know,... men.

They high-five and hit each other.

LATISHA

I'll check on him.

Latisha races out with the binoculars.

EXT. V'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Latisha sees V close the garage door and run into his house.

LATISHA

I bet it's a potty break.

Latisha drops the binoculars and runs like a track star to V's garage. The big garage door won't open so she checks the side door, and is surprised that it opens.

LATISHA (CONT'D)  
 (mumbles)  
 Idiot!

She sneaks inside and shuts the door.

INT. V'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

It's dark, so Latisha uses her nose to hunt down Eva's box.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - SAME

The Townsfolk, Deputy, Ben, and Eva listen to Gus sing a Christmas carol while laughing at himself in good cheer.

GUS  
 Do you see what I see? Do you see  
 what I see?

Everyone laughs as Gus lights up the most beautiful Christmas tree the town has ever seen.

GUS (CONT'D)  
 And not a present under the tree,  
 proving we can all be happy with  
 what we have, as long as we have  
 each other.

Everyone hugs, especially Ben, Eva, Gus, and Maria.

The Deputy gets an emergency radio call.

DISPATCH OFFICER (V.O.)  
 I know your busy... with him... but  
 we have another porch pirate  
 sighting. Over.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
 I should have guessed. I'm on my  
 way. Over.

The Deputy hugs Ben and Eva then starts to exit.

DISPATCH OFFICER (V.O.)  
 (hopeful)  
 You mean, it's not over?



DEPUTY SANTOS  
No, it's over, Jimmy, over!

She races to her patrol car.

BACK TO:

INT. V'S GARAGE - SAME

Latisha SNIFFS a dozen boxes as quickly as possible before finding the awful fish smell.

She opens the box, extracts the GPS device, and heads to the side door.

She puts her ear to the door and hears V exiting his house and shutting his front door.

She freezes, as V walks right by the side door signing.

V  
Jingle Bells, nothing smells,  
Christmas on the way,

He hums the rest of the song as he heads to his van.

EXT. V'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

V gets in the van as Latisha crawls out of the side door and toward the van.

Latisha stays low and crawls behind the van.

V checks the rearview mirror and side mirrors and sees nothing as Latisha attaches the GPS Device to the undercarriage.

V puts the van in reverse by accident and nearly crushes Latisha before putting the van in drive and RACING off.

V doesn't see Latisha laying on the driveway in the dark.

Latisha runs back to get her team.

A MINUTE LATER

Latisha, Bogs, and Caz take boxes from the garage and load them in Bogs' van.

When the van is filled, they RACE away.

BEGIN MONTAGE

-- We see a map of the town (or a sky view from a drone) of V's van on one side of town looking for packages to steal, Bogs' van looking to deliver packages, and the Deputy driving down empty streets between them.

-- Up close we see Caz returning packages, ringing the doorbell, then running back to Bogs' van, while Latisha monitors V's location.

-- Up close we see the Deputy looking around town, and getting frustrated.

-- From the sky view again, it looks like the old video game of Pacman, with everyone chasing but no one is getting close to the others.

-- The above sequence repeats with V finding fewer packages, the teens delivering many more packages, and the Deputy still not finding V and his van.

END MONTAGE

EXT. ABRAMS' B&B - DAWN

Ben and Eva hear a siren and look out the front door to see Bogs' van racing up to the house with the deputy right behind them with lights and siren.

The Deputy's patrol car skids to a stop to block the street.

She hops out with her pistol pulled and yells.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Step out of the van, slowly, with  
your hands in the air.

Bogs exits with his hands up. Then Latisha exits. Then Caz exits holding a small box.

BOGS

Don't shoot. It's us.

LATISHA

Our last delivery of the night.

CAZ

It's for Eva.

The Deputy holsters her pistol.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Delivery?

Bogs yawns, then they all yawn as Eva and Ben greet them with open arms.

BEN  
You found the porch pirate!

LATISHA  
(to the Deputy)  
We'll take you there. We have to make this delivery first.

Caz bends down and delivers the box to Eva, as Ben smiles.

EVA  
Can I open it, Daddy?

BEN  
I hope it's not a fish!

Eva opens the box to see a BRAND Tablet Computer.

Everyone cheers as Eva hugs Ben.

BEN (CONT'D)  
Happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas,  
Sweetie!

CAZ  
I got you this, Eva.

Caz hands her a gold bracelet.

EVA  
Gee, thanks, Caz!

Latisha hands her a stuffed Frankenstein doll.

EVA (CONT'D)  
Gee, thanks, Latisha!

Bogs hand her a small joke book.

EVA (CONT'D)  
A joke book?

BOGS  
(laughs)  
Get it. We three friends brought  
you gold, Frankenstein, and mirth!

This is Bogs' finest comic moment on Earth.

Everyone laughs! But then Bogs kept talking.

BOGS (CONT'D)  
Like The Three Amigos!

Everyone shakes their heads to hold back laughter.

BOGS (CONT'D)  
I mean, Three Wise Kids.

EVA  
I don't get it!

BEN  
I'll explain later.

Everyone laughs again. Caz and Latisha comfort Bogs.

EXT. V'S GARAGE - SAME

V opens his cargo doors (they SQUEAK) then opens his garage door to load up all the boxes and escape.

He is shocked and very angry to see an empty garage except for the box that smells like fish.

He SCREAMS and paces like a madman.

He checks his Tablet computer to see where Bogs' van is located. It shows that it's still under a tree by his house.

We SEE a clip of the GPS device in the tree on the empty street.

V grabs a baseball bat as a weapon and RACES off!

EXT. ABRAMS' B&B - SAME

Latisha's phone buzzes.

LATISHA  
It's V. He's on the move.

BOGS  
Trying to get out of town.

CAZ  
He lives right up the road and this  
is the only way out.

The Deputy runs behind her patrol car and pulls her pistol.

Bogs sneaks back into his van.

V's van comes racing down the road. He sees the Deputy's patrol car and slams on the brakes, almost crashing into her car.

Bogs steps on the gas to pull behind V blocking him from escaping in reverse.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Step out of the car with your hands  
in the air!

V looks around. He's stuck. He exits the van with his hands in the air.

V

I'm innocent!  
(points to Bogs)  
He did it!

Eva yells to V.

EVA

You stole my porch pirate bait.

V glares at Eva.

V

The stinky fish was your idea?!

Eva smiles.

BEN

We have video of you coming to our  
house on our new security camera.

Ben points down the driveway to the new camera.

V glares at Bogs, who acts dumb.

BOGS

Did I forget to write that one down  
on your delivery chart?

LATISHA

We tracked your van and it shows  
all the stops you made stealing  
packages on Christmas Eve.

(proudly)

Caz and I were Bogs' accomplices!

Gus is walking up slowly to the house.

GUS  
 That's awful, young man.  
 (points to V)  
 I'm talking to you! And you owe me  
 thirty dollars for a tree!

V  
 (angry)  
 You can't see anything, old man.

GUS  
 Open that back door, Deputy Santos.  
 See if it squeaks.

The Deputy opens the back of the V's van and the door SQUEAKS loudly.

We see a suitcase in the back of the van.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
 Going somewhere?

V  
 It's a free country.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
 Not where you're going!

LATISHA  
 We also have video of V unloading  
 packages into his garage.

The Deputy puts an arm around Eva.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
 Where I'm sure we'll find the  
 stinky fish.  
 (glares at Ben)  
 You knew what these kids were up  
 to?

BEN  
 They wanted to redeem themselves.

The Deputy smiles at the teens.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
 Did you really return every package  
 that pirate stole?

The teens nod 'yes' and hit each other playfully.

LATISHA  
 It was Christmas.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Then I guess you'll get the reward!

CAZ  
Reward?

The Deputy puts handcuffs on V.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
Townfolk chipped in hundreds of dollars at last night's Tree Lighting Ceremony to capture the dreaded porch pirates.

(to V)  
Mr. Vincent Roberts, I'm arresting you for fraud, using Bogs' name to rent two vans, and for grand theft of stealing hundreds of Christmas presents and a frozen fish over this past week.

V  
They robbed me last night!

Latisha and Caz whisper.

LATISHA  
We'd like Bogs to get the reward money to send to his refugee parents.

Caz kisses Bogs on the cheek.

CAZ  
And that's the last gift you'll get from either of us, until you make up your mind.

LATISHA  
(to Bogs)  
You got that right!

Everyone laughs.

BEN  
Who wants Christmas breakfast! Plenty of coffee, eggs, toast, and bacon that we have to eat before real guests arrive tomorrow.

Everyone cheers.

DEPUTY SANTOS  
I'll be back after I book this guy!

She puts a disgruntled V in the back of her squad car.

Ben, Eva, and Gus head in the door first.

Latisha and Caz glare at Bogs who tries to look innocent. The girls link arms with him and guide him to the front door.

They hit each other playfully as they walk in.

INT. ABRAMS' B&B - LATER

The Deputy has joined the breakfast party and there are smiles all around.

DEPUTY SANTOS

Bog, Latisha, and Caz should know that I spoke to their principal, and he's counting your eight hours of returning Christmas presents as your Community Service, so you are officially off of suspension.

The Deputy looks up to see the teens are almost asleep, leaning back with full bellies and big smiles.

Ben, Eva, and Gus laugh.

DEPUTY SANTOS (CONT'D)

And my boss, the Sheriff, wants to meet the little girl who invented the porch pirate trap with a frozen trout!

BEN

That's great, Eva, did you hear that?

Ben, Gus, and the Deputy smile at Eva who is lost in her new Tablet computer.

Gus stands to leave.

GUS

I better get going, or I'll miss the Church service. You all made this a wonderful Christmas.

Ben shakes his hand and the Deputy hugs Gus on the way out.

DEPUTY SANTOS

I'll be along shortly, Mr. Waters.

Ben asks a sincere question.



BEN

Each in their own way, Mr. Waters?

Gus smiles back at Eva, then at Ben.

GUS

You're doing a fine job with that little girl, Ben. And these teens love you too.

(sings to the Deputy)

All you need is love!

Gus looks back at the smiles on everyone's faces.

GUS (CONT'D)

Ya know, if history has taught me anything, it's that if we are judged by the examples we set, and the smiles we create, then

(points up to Heaven)

You all will have a place in my vision of Heaven.

Ben walks out. Ben and the Deputy's eyes meet. They put their arms around each other and kiss.

Christmas music plays in the background as they shut the door.

FADE OUT.

**THE END**