

THE SNOWBALL KID

By

Karl J. Niemiec

Karl J. Niemiec
LapTopPublishing.com
KJN@LapTopPublishing.com
317-379-5716

INT. GRANDPA TUCKER'S KOKOMO, IN. HOME - CHRISTMAS EVE - NIGHT

GRANDPA WILLIAM TUCKER (82) sits with three young children before a fire and a Christmas tree, sipping hot cocoa.

JESSICA (7) raises her hand.

Grandpa looks at her.

JESSICA
Grandpa, do you believe in Santa Clause?

GRANDPA
Oh, yes. Very much so, Jessica.

VIVIAN (5) puts down her doll.

VIVIAN
But why? How do you know he's for real?

GRANDPA
Because I met him once.

WILLIAM (10) takes a sudden interest, and turns from looking at the packages under the tree.

WILLIAM
Did not.

GRANDPA
Oh, yes I did, young man.

VIVIAN
Tell us.

GRANDPA
Well. It's a long-winded story.

VIVIAN
I like windy stories.

JESSICA
Please, Grandpa.

GRANDPA
I'm not sure if Grandma....

WILLIAM
Santa's not real. He's just making it up. He's pulling your finger.

JESSICA
Shut up. You're not pullin' my
finger, are you, grandpa?

GRANDPA
Well, he's real to me. I guess you
have to decide for yourself.

Just then GRANDMA TUCKER enters.

WILLIAM
Grandma, did Grandpa ever meet
Santa Clause?

Grandma looks at Grandpa and smiles.

GRANDMA
Only Grandpa knows for sure. Did
you, honey?

GRANDPA
I did.

VIVIAN
Then tell us your windy story.

GRANDPA
Oh, it's such a long time ago,
Vivian.

JESSICA
How long time ago?

GRANDPA
It all started when I was about
your age, William. Couple years
older before it ended.

VIVIAN
How long ago is that?

WILLIAM
A million years, I bet.

JESSICA
Grandpa's not a Dinosaur.

GRANDPA
Not quite. But it sure feels like
it at times.

VIVIAN

You need to get more exercise,
Grandpa. I hear your bones creak.

JESSICA

Yeah. Mommy says it's so you won't
get too fat and can't get up no
more.

GRANDPA

She does, does she?

WILLIAM

She's just wishin' you don't drop
dead on Grandma, is all.

GRANDPA

I see. Can't have that now can we.
I suppose I could use some exercise.

WILLIAM

Ought'a get yourself a bike.

VIVIAN

Yeah. We all got bikes. You could
ride with us, Grandpa.

JESSICA

Or you could get lip-o-suction.

GRANDPA

Liposuction?

WILLIAM

Lip-o-suction your mouth it's so
big, Jessica.

GRANDMA

William, we'll have none of that
talk on Christmas Eve.

WILLIAM

She doesn't even know what
Liposuction is.

JESSICA

Uh-huh, it's where they suck all
the fat out of TV people so we get
to watch only the skinny ones.

WILLIAM

Then you wouldn't have a brain.

GRANDMA
William, that's enough.

VIVIAN
I'd rather he got a bike. We don't
want Grandpa to disappear.

GRANDPA
Well now. Riding with you all
would be splendid. Then I wish I
had a new bike. A blue one, just
like my first bike.

VIVIAN
Maybe Santa will bring you one.

JESSICA
You got to ask first in a letter.

VIVIAN
I wrote mine. Mommy sent it.

WILLIAM
Don't cry if you get a lump of
coal.

JESSICA
You only get lumps if you're on his
naughty list.

VIVIAN
You're not on his naughty list, are
you, Grandpa?

GRANDPA
Not for some time, I'm proud to
say.

GRANDMA
So am I, dear.

Grandma passes through the room again.

GRANDPA
I haven't been naughty for quite
sometime, have I Grandma.

GRANDMA
I could dream of recalling, honey.
(winks at Grandpa)
But your grandpa was once a very
naughty boy.

GRANDPA

Now, come on. I was young. And the times were hard. People were losing everything. And there were a lot of real bad men running around doing a lot worse than me.

WILLIAM

You were a bad guy? Like you robbed a bank or something?

VIVIAN

Back when everyone was depressed?

GRANDMA

The Great American Depression, Vivian. It started in 1929.

JESSICA

Yeah, that's when all the stockings crashed?

Vivian turns to the stocking hanging on the fireplace.

VIVIAN

Not mine, it's held up by two nails.

GRANDMA

The Stockmarket, Vivian.

VIVIAN

Stockmarket. What's that?

GRANDPA

Fool's gold. But no. I never robbed a bank. I was just trying to protect my mother.

WILLIAM

Did you kill someone?

GRANDPA

No, never killed anyone outside of going to war.

WILLIAM

You went to war?

GRANDMA

Grandpa was in World War Two.

VIVIAN
Was that a hundred years ago.

GRANDPA
Almost.

WILLIAM
Were you a war hero?

GRANDPA
No, just another grunt.

WILLIAM
So that's where Jessica gets that
from.

JESSICA
I don't grunt.

VIVIAN
Yes you do. Every morning.

JESSICA
Grandma!

GRANDMA
Children, let Grandpa tell his
Santa Clause story.

WILLIAM
Tell us how you were bad, too
though? Did you hurt Santa?

GRANDPA
Of course not. Just myself. And
broke my mother's heart.

JESSICA
Is that against the law?

GRANDPA
Sometimes. If you don't mend it.

WILLIAM
So you were on Santa's naughty
list?

GRANDPA
Yep. I'm afraid I was.

VIVIAN
Why?

WILLIAM
Cause you broke your mother's
heart?

GRANDPA
Well....

WILLIAM
Come on, tell us, Grandpa.

JESSICA
We won't tell Mom.

WILLIAM
Not Dad neither.

VIVIAN
I won't even tell the dog catcher.

GRANDPA
Well, then. I guess a little
tellin' won't hurt.

GRANDMA
I'll make us all some fresh cocoa.

WILLIAM
More marshmallows, too. Didn't
give me nearly enough.

JESSICA
So. What year was it again?

GRANDPA
1931. Three years into the Great
Depression. And nobody had a job.
My mom had lost her's at a law firm
two months earlier. And my daddy,
he closed his furniture store and
up and moved to California to work
in the movies when the market
crashed.

WILLIAM
Your daddy left you when you was my
age?

GRANDPA
No. Jessica's age. When I was
eight. Sent money for a while.
Until he fell upon hard times.
Then we stopped hearing from him.
Mom thought he was gone for good.

VIVIAN

Doesn't sound so good to me.

GRANDPA

It wasn't. Seemed I was the only one in town. Because a lot of weaker men left back then.

JESSICA

What happened? Was he mad at you?

WILLIAM

He's gonna tell, if you'd just listen.

GRANDPA

I thought he was. But as it turned out, it was all for the best. He didn't take us with him on account of wanting to keep us in this house.

JESSICA

You lived in this house when you were our age?

GRANDPA

My daddy built it. I was born here. In Grandma's sowing room.

VIVIAN

Was your mother sowing?

GRANDPA

No, she was in labor.

VIVIAN

Oh, I thought she lost her job.

GRANDPA

She did. Things were tough at home and I had my head on wrong.

JESSICA

That must of hurt.

GRANDPA

Now, close your eyes and picture the hardest and the deepest snow you ever walked in. Go ahead close them. Now double it. The wind blowing so hard you could barely stand. And the whole world covered in white. Even the street lights.

VIVIAN
Wooooow.... it's a real gizzard.

EXT. STONE BRIDGE - NIGHT (1931)

Snow coming down hard.

The street lights are barely visible.

A foot or more on the ground already.

No cars anywhere.

Then out of the storm comes a figure.

It's ten-year-old BILLY TUCKER.

He's bundled up in a wool hat, scarf and coat too small for him.

Walking strait into the storm.

Pushing a blue bike, also too small for him.

He finally makes it to the center of the old stone bridge.

And looks over the edge.

The wind and snow biting at his face.

EXT. FROZEN RIVER - NIGHT

The ice bare, the snow blown into drifts at its banks.

EXT. STONE BRIDGE - NIGHT

Billy looks at his bike.

Then back at where he'd come.

Out of the heavy snow comes a dark figure.

Big guy. It's SETH JONES.

Seth is not a happy man. He's half running half walking.
And tired as much as mad.

SETH
Don't you do it, Billy.

BILLY
You ain't given my bike away.

SETH
You're too darn big for it.

BILLY
Santa gave it to *me*.

SETH
Don't be foolish. You're too old
to be believing in that nonsense.

BILLY
It ain't nonsense. Santa gave me
this bike when I was five 'cause I
wrote him a letter askin' him for
it.

SETH
Boy, don't you move.

BILLY
I ain't your boy.

Billy picks up the blue bike and puts it on the stone bridge
side.

BILLY
You come any closer, Seth, and I
throw it in the river.

SETH
Son --

BILLY
-- I ain't your son, neither.

SETH
Billy... things are rough, and it's
time you gave that bike to Tommy.
He's five now, he'll get some good
use out of them tires.

BILLY
You ain't given my bike to no one.
Especially not to your boy.

SETH
Tommy's gonna be your brother.

BILLY

You and my mom ain't married.
She's still married to my dad.
And I don't want Tommy riding my
bike.

SETH

Billy, you can get yourself a new
bike.

BILLY

How? You take my bike away, I
won't be able to do my paper rout.
And mom can barely feed us without
my help.

SETH

You know I work as many hours as
they give me. Just so I can give
your momma what I can. Maybe you
could shovel some of this snow.

BILLY

I still want this bike. I told
you. It's special 'cause Santa
gave it to me.

SETH

Boy, don't be talkin' foolishness.
There ain't no Santa and you're too
old to be writin' letters askin'
Santa to bring back your daddy.

BILLY

Why? He wouldn't take my bike away.

SETH

Your daddy ain't comin' back, Billy.

BILLY

Yes he is. He said he would.

SETH

It's just me and your mamma now.
And you and Tommy. We're your
family from now on. That house is
big enough for all of us. You gotta
understand that. We'll be livin'
together as a family as soon as your
momma gets some papers signed so we
can get hitch.

BILLY

I know what I know. And I know
this is my bike. And I ain't given
it to no one. I love this bike.

SETH

Tommy will love it, too.

BILLY

No he won't. That little brat
ruins everythin'. Like he done the
model planes my dad made with me.
Twerp won't stay out'a my room.

SETH

Please, Billy, it's Christmas Eve.
And I promised Tommy he'd get your
bike. And I'd teach him how to ride
it come Spring.

BILLY

Well, you shouldn't've lied to him.

Seth suddenly charges towards Billy. It's not easy, with all
the snow.

Just before he reaches Billy...

... Billy let's the bike go.

EXT. FROZEN RIVER - NIGHT

The bike falls the hundred feet or more.

And CRASHES right through the ice and disappears.

EXT. SIDE OF BRIDGE - NIGHT

Billy and Seth stand there watching.

Rage on the Seth's face.

Satisfaction on Billy's.

BILLY

Maybe you can teach that snot-nosed
brat of yours how to ice fish.

Seth SLAPS Billy real hard across the face.

Billy just looks at him. It's too cold to cry.

Seth regretting it the moment it happens.
Even more, after Billy kicks him in the chestnuts.
Billy runs off, disappearing into the snow.
Seth falls to his knees. In a lot of pain.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The kids sit there in amazement as Grandma brings in fresh cocoa.

WILLIAM
You kicked him in the chestnuts?

GRANDMA
William.

WILLIAM
Grandpa said it, not me.

JESSICA
You said it, too.

WILLIAM
I was just asking because he said
he kicked this guy in the --

GRANDMA
-- William.

WILLIAM
Sorry, Grandma. You kicked him in
the balls?

VIVIAN
Ahhh, William said balls.

WILLIAM
Well what should I call them?

GRANDPA
They're testicles.

GRANDMA
Don't call them anything. Don't be
so graphic, honey.

GRANDPA
Sorry.

Grandpa leans in close to the kids so Grandma can't hear.

GRANDPA

I kicked him in the naads.

The kids GIGGLE.

Grandma just shakes her head.

WILLIAM

Wow, so where'd you go?

VIVIAN

Is that how you got on Santa's naughty list?

GRANDPA

No. No, I believe that happened gradually.

WILLIAM

Because you started robbing stores?

GRANDMA

Grandpa never robbed stores. Did you honey? Honey?

GRANDPA

No. Not quite so bad. But almost.

WILLIAM

You were a robber though?

JESSICA

A highway man?

VIVIAN

A stuck-up artist?

WILLIAM

Stick up.

VIVIAN

Stick up, stuck up. He's still an artist. Grandpa's got talent. Look at this house he remodeled.

WILLIAM

Tell her to stop interrupting, Grandma.

GRANDMA

Why don't we all listen to Grandpa.
Go ahead, dear. It's getting late.

GRANDPA

Well, I was ten going on eleven.
And dang, it was so cold and I had
to eat and needed a place to stay.
And after throwing my bike off the
bridge, I also had to walk. And
Seth hittin' me. Well, there wasn't
a slim chance thing's would be much
good at home anytime soon. I sure
didn't want him to marry my mom.

WILLIAM

So what happened?

JESSICA

Where'd you go?

WILLIAM

Prison?

VIVIAN

I'd go to Disneyland. It's warm.

GRANDPA

No. No Disneyland, no prison. But
almost. Let's just say things
started to spiral out of control.

JESSICA

Grandma, did Grandpa go to jail?

GRANDMA

Reform school.

VIVIAN

Reformed school?

WILLIAM

But ain't that a nice way of sayin'
jail? 'Cause it's for kids.

GRANDPA

It was a place where they tried to
turn young boys and girls back into
usable parts of society.

VIVIAN

Society? Isn't that a weird nervous condition? Mommy's got that. I heard her tell Daddy she was full of society.

GRANDMA

Anxiety, sweetie. Means your mother was nervous about something.

JESSICA

What's mom anxiety about? Why is she so nerves?

GRANDPA

She's waiting to hear if she got a promotion. She'll find out tonight.

JESSICA

She gonna be Captain?

VIVIAN

I ain't calling mommy Captain Mommy.

GRANDMA

No. Your mother is waiting to see if she's getting a better job in the department.

VIVIAN

Maybe Santa will bring her one.

GRANDMA

Maybe he will, dear, maybe he will.

GRANDPA

I guess no one wants to hear my old boring story.

JESSICA

I do.

VIVIAN

I want to hear your boring old story.

GRANDMA

Go on, Grandpa. Before we all fall asleep.

WILLIAM

Yeah, never mind them. What happened? Give us the bloody details.

VIVIAN

Bet you were full of anxiety?

GRANDPA

I was. I was indeed.

EXT. MURPHY'S GAS AND GO STATION - LATER THAT NIGHT

Billy runs in from the snow storm. His hands and feet freezing.

A clerk, JACK MURPHY, 50's, is there, eating a sandwich out of his lunch box. And a thermos of coffee.

JACK

What in tarnation are you doin' runnin' around in this storm?

BILLY

I ain't runnin'.

JACK

Heck you ain't. You're all out of breath. What did ya go and do? Kill someone?

BILLY

I ain't done nothin'. Mind your own business, old man.

JACK

Smart-mouth youngen, huh. Well, you just get your smart-mouth out of my station.

BILLY

I ain't goin' back out in that storm.

JACK

Wait, I recognize you. What's your name? I'm calling your daddy.

BILLY

My daddy's in California.

JACK
 Then I'm calling the law. Can't
 be running around on your own.
 You ain't but twelve, if that.

Jack reaches over for the phone. CLICKS the receiver.

BILLY
 I'm sixteen.

JACK
 And I'm twenty-nine. The Police.

Billy comes up behind him.

BILLY
 Hey, old man. Don't be callin' the
 cops.

JACK
 It's too late. She's connecting.

So Billy panics and grabs up a flashlight.

The old man startles back into the wall.

Knocking down stacks of large black olive cans from a shelf
 above.

HITTING Jack hard on the head.

The old man slides down in his chair.

A DISPATCHER VOICE comes on the phone.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
 Hello? Hello?

Billy picks up the phone.

Not sure what to do at first.

BILLY
 Ahhh... Shoot, you better get an
 ambulance to Murphy's Gas and Go
 Station right away. There's been a
 robbery. Three guys. Big guys.
 They come in and robbed the place.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
 Who is this? Hello. Young man,
 who are you?

But Billy drops the phone.

Grabs up the old man's dinner and coffee.

And heads out the door.

The old man comes too.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Hello? Hello?

Jack picks up the phone.

JACK
What do you want?

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
You called us. Has there been a robbery out at your place, Jack?

Jack is confused.

Picks up the can of olives.

Not sure what has happened to him.

He rubs the sore spot on his head.

Thinks.

JACK
What?
(looks before him)
Hell, ya. Some kid just conked me on the head and stole my corned beef sandwich.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
What did you have on it?

JACK
I had... what difference does it make? For cryin' out loud.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Case we catch up with him. We'll know if he's got it with him or something on his hands or shirt. Evidence, Jack, evidence.

JACK
Oh, then I had coleslaw on it with canned tomato. And black olives.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Black olives? Fancy sandwich.

JACK
Imported too. Got me a whole case.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Shoot, I ain't had me a good olive
since the market crashed.

JACK
Stop by I'll sell ya a can of them.
Fell off a truck last fall.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Fell off a truck?

JACK
Forget it, you gonna make a federal
case about it.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Keep it up and I'll confiscate it
all for evidence.

JACK
You can try.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Never mind. What else he take?

JACK
Took my thermos and flashlight.
Full of Mom's coffee. Punk kid.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Can you describe him for me?

JACK
Sure, he's Will Tucker's boy.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Will Tucker? Billy? Little Billy
Tucker robbed you?

JACK
Yeah. I heard his old man run off
to Hollywood. Can't be more than
twelve on toes.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
He's ten. You let a ten year-old
get the drop on ya?

JACK
Hell, he said he was sixteen.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
That all he took?

JACK
You mean money?

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
No, Jack, I mean your socks. Of course I mean money.

JACK
Let me look. I think he did.

Jack takes a twenty out of the drawer. Puts it into his pocket.

JACK
Yeah, he done cleaned me out.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Don't touch anything until we get there.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The kids all sit on the floor. Mesmerized.

WILLIAM
How did you know this if you run off?

GRANDPA
I didn't. It was snowin' so hard I was still just outside the door, eating. I heard the whole thing. He made up the whole story about me robbing the register. Still, it didn't look good for me.

WILLIAM
What'd you do?

GRANDPA
Well, like I said, it was cold.

VIVIAN
And windy.

JESSICA
And snowing.

GRANDPA
Yes, very hard.

WILLIAM
Did you go back inside and hit him
for lying?

GRANDPA
No, I didn't hurt him.

WILLIAM
What than?

GRANDPA
I swiped his truck.

JESSICA
His truck?

WILLIAM
You drove a truck at ten?

GRANDPA
I was tall for my age.

VIVIAN
And a bad boy.

WILLIAM
Dang, I can't drive a truck.

GRANDPA
Sure you could.

WILLIAM
Grandma, can I drive the truck?

GRANDMA
No you can't. Don't encourage him,
dear.

GRANDPA
I just meant, you could if you had
to.

WILLIAM
Oh.

JESSICA
Did you have to?

GRANDPA
If I wanted to get away.

VIVIAN
Did ya?

GRANDPA
Yes I did. So I thought.

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - NIGHT

Billy drives and old flatbed the best he can.

He's heading towards town.

The going is rough.

Seth Jones passes him by, going the other way. Plowing through the snow.

INT. JACK'S FLATBED - NIGHT

Billy scrunches down.

EXT. SETH'S CAR - NIGHT

Seth slows to look at him.

INT. SETH'S CAR - NIGHT

Seth suddenly realizes who he sees.

And tries to stop but the car continues to slide...

... and SMASHES sideways into a tree.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Seth gets out and looks at the damage to his car.

He throws down his cap. Being whipped by snow.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Grandpa pauses to sip his cocoa.

WILLIAM

Isn't Grandma's daddy's name Jack
Murphy?

Grandma smiles.

GRANDMA

Yes. He grew founder of your
grandpa over the years.

GRANDPA

After he found out she gave me the
keys to his flatbed that night.

Grandma reaches out and touches her husband's hand.

GRANDMA

He promised never to tell.

VIVIAN

Did you?

GRANDMA

I did promis.

JESSICA

Did you two have a shotgun wedding?

GRANDMA

No, we had an eloped wedding.

VIVIAN

Antelope wedding. What's an
antelope wedding?

WILLIAM

They ran off and got hitched,
dummy. Like in the movies.

GRANDPA

Yes, like in the movies.

GRANDMA

It was very romantic.

VIVIAN

And they call it antelope because
you was running off?

GRANDPA

I guess so.

WILLIAM

So what happened next? Did you shoot it out with the coppers?

GRANDPA

No shooting. But we had it out.

VIVIAN

An you got in a lot of trouble?

GRANDPA

Yes, I did.

EXT. SMALL TOWN - NIGHT

Billy drives the flatbed into town.

EXT. OTHER END OF SMALL TOWN - NIGHT

A roadblock is made up of two cars and two pickups.

But it's snowing so hard, the cars and trucks are barely visible.

EXT. MIDDLE OF TOWN - NIGHT

The flatbed comes through town, throwing up snow in it's wake.

EXT. ROADBLOCK - NIGHT

The cops all get out of their cars and trucks as they HEAR the flatbed grinding gears, headed their way.

CHARLEY WHITE realizes...

CHARLEY

Dang, he ain't gonna see us.

INT. FLATBED - NIGHT

Billy can barely see over the steering wheel.

The wipers go as fast as they can but they aren't much help.

His eyes light up with surprise.

The roadblock peaks out of the driving snow.

Billy slams on the BRAKES and the flatbed starts to SLIDE.
He tries to down shift, but it's not helping at all.

EXT. ROADBLOCK - NIGHT

The sliding flatbed comes out of the driving snow.
The cops realize that the flatbed isn't gonna stop in time.
The cops scatter out of the way.

INT. FLATBED - NIGHT

Billy closes his eyes.
While trying to steer the truck away.
It turns sideways.
And continues to slide in the snow.
Billy ducks down and holds onto the seat.

EXT. ROADBLOCK - NIGHT

The flatbed plows sideways into all the cop cars and trucks.
Then silence. Just snow.
Until the four cops start poking their heads out of the wreckage.
Trying to see what's happened.
The flat bed lies on its side.
Charley White gets up and draws his gun.

CHARLEY
Can you hear me, Billy?

No answer.

CHARLEY
Do you have a gun, boy?

Still no answer.

JUNIOR WELLS sticks his head up.

JUNIOR
Charley. I think the kid's out
cold or dead.

CHARLEY
Go have a look, Junior.

JUNIOR
What if he ain't out cold and got a
gun?

CHARLEY
Use yours.

JUNIOR
I ain't shootin' no neighborhood
kid. My wife would have my hide.
Be a laughin' stock in her sowin'
circle.

CHARLEY
I'll go. Maybe you ought to join
that sowin' circle yourself.

JUNIOR
You callin' me yellow?

CHARLEY
Times like this is when you got to
decide if you're a neighbor or the
law. Told you that when you signed
up to be one of us.

Charley takes a step forward around his car...
... and a snowball comes out of the storm.

JUNIOR
Look out!

SPLAT!

It hits Charley square in the face.

CHARLEY
What the?

JUNIOR
Dang kid threw a snowball.

CHARLEY
Billy!

BILLY (O.S.)
Any closer and I bean ya again.

CHARLEY
Boy, you in a whole lot of trouble
already.

BILLY (O.S.)
You're not takin' me alive, copper.

Charley stands back up. Holsters his gun.

CHARLEY
Don't be silly, boy. We ain't
gonna hurt ya.

They're doing their best to see Billy.

But it's snowing so hard they can't see the snowballs until
they hit them.

SPLAT!

Charley gets it in the head again.

BILLY (O.S.)
I warned ya.

CHARLEY
Damn it, Billy. Stop all this
nonsense. You're daddy's gonna
whip your butt.

BILLY (O.S.)
He's gonna have a long drive from
California just to beat me.

CHARLEY
I meant your new daddy, Seth.

BILLY
He ain't my daddy. And I already
took care of him. He come around
again, I'll give him some more.

SPLAT! Junior gets one on the shoulder.

JUNIOR
Dang boy, you got a solid arm
there. You didn't hurt Seth, did
ya.

BILLY

Just a little south of where he hurt me.

CHARLEY

Your mom's not gonna like this.

BILLY

I know. But the next cop I see gets it between the eyes.

EXT. BEHIND COP CARS - NIGHT

Charley and Junior and the others huddle down.

CHARLEY

I say we rush him.

ABRAHAM, draws his gun.

ABRAHAM

Hell, I don't want to shoot that boy, neither. But he's robbin' and hurtin' people. I say we take him down anyway we can.

CHARLEY

That's up to the courts to decide. Until then, he's a ten-year-old kid who just needs a whipping.

JUNIOR

What do you want to do than? Spank his butt.

CHARLEY

No. We give him what he wants.

Charley makes himself a snowball.

ABRAHAM

A snowball fight?

CHARLEY

Arm yourself. And spread out. He can't get us all. We'll hold him down here until Seth arrives. See if he can straighten the boy out.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The children are laughing their heads off.

WILLIAM

You conked them with snowballs?

GRANDPA

Was all the ammo I had. And there was no turning back.

WILLIAM

Grandma, is that why you say 'Snowball, you're aimin' for trouble' sometimes when you get mad at Grandpa?

GRANDMA

That's why. The papers called him 'The Snowball Kid'.

WILLIAM

You got your picture in the paper?

GRANDPA

Only the local ones that I saw.

WILLIAM

Wow.

GRANDMA

It wasn't a good thing, William.

WILLIAM

But 'The Snowball Kid'? Why didn't they just shoot you?

JESSICA

Yeah. They do now.

GRANDPA

Kokomo was a small town back then. A simpler time. Everyone knew each other. They knew I was just a mixed up kid going through some hard times.

JESSICA

So you did hard time?

GRANDPA

Seemed like it back then.

WILLIAM
So, they snuck up with snowballs?

GRANDPA
They sure tried.

EXT. OVERTURNED FLATBED - NIGHT

Billy hides behind the flatbed feverishly making snowballs.
He's got a big pile.

EXT. BEHIND COP CARS - NIGHT

Charley watches the best he can.

He's got a snowball.

He's signaling for Junior and Abraham to make their way
around the right side of the flatbed.

And GARY BAGUIO around the other way.

Charley makes his way up the middle of the street.

EXT. ROADBLOCK - NIGHT

Junior's got two snowballs. He's making his way through the
storm.

SPLAT!

Junior gets one HARD on the head.

He covers up and BAM gets one on the chest.

On the other side, Gary breaks for the flatbed.

And Billy gets him THREE TIMES before Gary slips and falls
into the street on his knees.

Gary gets the LAST ONE on the face.

So Gary runs back and hides behind a bench at the bus stop.

GARY
Son of a gun. Billy, you're only
making this worse.

BILLY (O.S.)
Stick your head up again, Officer
Baguio. I'll show you worse.

JUNIOR
What are we gonna do?

CHARLEY
We charge him again. It's just
snow.

JUNIOR
Those things hurt. I got a welt
on my forehead the size of a
grapefruit.

CHARLEY
Don't be a baby. It's snow.

GARY
And ice. He's pullin' ice off the
bottom of the truck. Packin' it
inside the snowball.

Charley hunkers down low.

CHARLEY
Get ready. Arm yourself. Go!

The four cops charge Billy.

Out of the storm snowballs hit them ALL HARD, but they keep
coming.

Splat, splat, splat!

Falling but getting back up.

Abraham takes ONE SQUARE on the nose.

Until they are right up on the flatbed.

And they converge around it. Snowballs drawn.

EXT. BEHIND FLATBED - NIGHT

But no Billy.

Footsteps trudge off into the snow.

JUNIOR
He went that way.

GARY

Dumb, kid. How'd he get so smart?

CHARLEY

You see the arm on him? Put him on the mound in my boy's league.

JUNIOR

I don't think he missed us once.

ABRAHAM

I think he broke my nose.

Charley looks at Abraham's nose.

CHARLEY

Dang, if it ain't pushed to the side.

GARY

He's makin' for Thompson's place.

EXT. MIDDLE OF THOMPSON'S POND - NIGHT

Billy makes his way across the pond.

But the wind has whipped away the snow, and he keeps sliding and falling.

The wind is so strong it blows him along the ice on his butt.

EXT. EDGE OF THOMPSON'S POND - NIGHT

The cops make their way through the deep drifts.

CHARLEY

Don't get up, boy.

JUNIOR

We ain't foolin'.

CHARLEY

And no more snowballs.

BILLY (O.S.)

Come and get me, coppers.

CHARLEY

Coppers? We got guns, Billy. You damaged city property. This ain't no game.

BILLY (O.S.)
You ain't gonna shoot an unarmed kid.

ABRAHAM
No? You broke my nose. That's assaultin' an officer of the law.

BILLY (O.S.)
I call it a good shot. And self defence. The way I see it. Four coppers against one kid.

Seth Jones shows up.

SETH
What's he doin' out there?

CHARLEY
What a mess, Seth. He's just sitting there... on the pond.

SETH
Stupid kid. He's out of control. If it weren't for his ma, I'd say shoot him.

CHARLEY
We ain't shootin' kids.

SETH
Billy, you know that pond ain't safe.

BILLY (O.S.)
I'm a lot lighter than you all. So you stay off.

SETH
Boy, you in a whole lot of trouble already. Robbin', assaultin', truck stealin', destroyin' public property.

GARY
And he broke my nose.

SETH
You let him hit you?

GARY
Hit us all. With snowballs.

SETH

Yeah, he kicked me good. One of us is gonna have to go out and get him, I guess.

GARY

You're seein' his ma, you best go.

SETH

This ain't my jurisdiction, and I ain't in uniform. And the kid ain't right about me and his ma.

CHARLEY

We go get 'im, he'll end up in Reform School for sure. Then you'll be lookin' after him anyway. What'll she say to that?

SETH

Nothin' good. But up at the school would be a good place for him. I could arrange it if you press charges. We'll teach him how to behave. Go get him.

CHARLEY

I don't know.

Seth looks over the men as he thinks it over.

SETH

It's hard times. You boys oughta be eatin' less. You're all fat.

ABRAHAM

You're just small boned.

SETH

Billy, I'm comin' out to get you. Bring you home safe. Back to your ma.

BILLY (O.S.)

No you ain't. I can hear ya.

SETH

Boy, the judge will throw the book at you as it is. You need to be taught some self-control.

BILLY (O.S.)
 You ain't takin' me alive. I ain't
 goin' up to that school.

CHARLEY
 Stop sayin' that. We ain't gonna
 hurt you.

SETH
 Surround the pond. He doesn't get
 off. Keep him talkin', Charley, so
 I can find him.

JUNIOR
 Watch him, Seth. Boy can hit a
 movin' target.

Seth gets up and steps out onto the pond. Being careful he
 doesn't fall through.

CHARLEY
 Boy, this is no way to make us
 spend our Christmas Eve.

JUNIOR
 Yeah, it's cold. And our families
 are expecting us back soon.

BILLY (O.S.)
 Go on home then. I didn't invite
 you in the first place.

CHARLEY
 You want to tell us what this is
 all about?

BILLY (O.S.)
 He tried to give my bike away.

CHARLEY
 What? Who?

BILLY (O.S.)
 Seth did.

CHARLEY
 This all about your old blue bike?

BILLY (O.S.)
 It was about *my* blue bike. And I
 wasn't givin' it to nobody. Cause
 it was mine.

CHARLEY

You hear how foolish this sounds to us adults. Throwin' away your freedom over some dumb bike.

BILLY (O.S.)

Yeah, then give your car to Junior there. Go ahead, give him your keys, Officer White.

CHARLEY

Alright, Billy that's enough back talk.

BILLY (O.S.)

Can't do it, can ya. Because it just ain't right. Santa gave me that bike and I'll give it away when I'm done with it. And I ain't. So I threw it off the bridge. To keep him from takin' it from me and givin' it to his boy, Tommy.

EXT. THOMPSON'S POND - NIGHT

Seth does his best not to fall down.

Billy suddenly comes out of the snow and pushes him.

And runs off.

Seth slides on his boots, trying not to fall.

But the wind's got him now.

And all the arm waving just delays the pratfall onto his butt.

EXT. FAR EDGE OF THOMPSON'S POND - NIGHT

Billy finally makes it to the edge.

And Charley and Junior spring out of the dark.

And tackle him into a snow bank.

CHARLEY

We got you, Billy.

BILLY
Let go of me you two bit creeps.

JUNIOR
Stop squirming. Before we hurt
somethin'.

CHARLEY
Put your cuffs on him.

Billy squirms making it impossible.

So Charley and Junior stick his head into a snow drift until
he quits squirming.

Seth comes running up.

SETH
What are you doing?

CHARLEY
Holding him down, so we can cuff
him.

SETH
You got his head in the snow.
You're gonna suffocate the kid.

Charley and Junior pull Billy's head up.

Billy SPITS snow in Junior's face.

Junior shoves Billy's head back in the snow and finishes
putting on his cuff.

SETH
Pull him up.

Charley pulls Billy up on his feet.

SETH
Young man, you're under arrest.

BILLY
You ain't no cop, Seth. You're
just a dumb part time security
guard.

SETH
Somebody arrest him.

As they take Billy away.

CHARLEY

You're under arrest, Billy Tucker.

BILLY

Big men, takes five of ya to catch one kid. Hey Seth, tell Tommy to stay out of my room, or I'll kick his butt, too. And stay away from my mom. And out of our house. I find you on our property again. I'll come lookin' for ya.

SETH

Shut him up.

Suddenly a PHOTOGRAPHER with a flashbulb camera shows up and starts taking pictures.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Hey, Billy, you got a quote for us?

BILLY

Yeah. Kokomo cops say Santa ain't real.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The kids have a stunned look on their face.

JESSICA

But you said you believed in Santa.

GRANDPA

I do.

WILLIAM

Yeah, but what does all this got to do with meeting Santa?

GRANDPA

Everything. I'm getting to that.

WILLIAM

Talk about over the river and through the wood.

GRANDPA

Told you it was long winded.

VIVIAN

I bet your mother was sad.

GRANDPA
Yes she was. Very sad.

INT. COURT HOUSE - DAY

The JUDGE sits at his place. Billy's mom, MRS. TUCKER, cries.

Seth, Charley, Junior, Gary and Jack are there.

Seth tries to comfort Mrs. Tucker, but she pushes him away.

Billy is put on his feet, in handcuffs.

BILLY
Mom. Mom, I didn't do nothin'.
Please, Mom. They're lyin'. I
never stole money. Don't let Seth
do this to me.

The Judge POUNDS his gavel on the desk.

JUDGE
Son, you've had your chance. And
you haven't given us one bit of an
explanation for your deplorable
behavior. Beyond you don't believe
in being good no more if adults can
take what Santa gives you away. So
let's see what three years in our
Youth Correctional Facility does to
help you see life a little more
realistically. Santa Clause. Get
him out of my site, Charley. And
Seth, you make sure he gets taught
some social behavior before he's
let out.

SETH
Yes, you're honor.

Seth helps pull Billy through the door.

It closes on him.

Mrs. Tucker cries all alone.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Seth helps Charley drag Billy down the hall.

BILLY

You can't do this to me, Seth.

SETH

Watch me.

BILLY

I'll get out. I'll get out and get even with you. You two bit punk. Think you're gonna hold me in some dumb baby camp while you chase after my mom? You wait until my dad get's back. He'll teach ya.

SETH

I said, shut up. You ruined it for me and your mom. That's for sure.

BILLY

Good. I'll be out runnin' free before you know what hit ya. And I'll come lookin' for ya.

Charley takes out his keys to open a door.

Seth holds Billy back, looking to make sure no one can see.

CHARLEY

Wagon waitin' for you out this door. Billy, the best thing for you is to learn to keep your mouth shut.

Seth pushes Billy down another hall out of sight.

SETH (O.S.)

You got a lot to learn.

BILLY (O.S.)

Hey, what do you think your....

Billy's words end with a THUD of a billy club to his head.

Charley turns around at the door.

CHARLEY

Hey, what are you doin', Seth?

Seth drags Billy back into the hall.

SETH

He tried to get away.

CHARLEY

Yeah, well thanks, now we got to carry him. And I got a bad back.

SETH

Hell with it, we'll drag him.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Grandpa takes a sip of his cocoa. Letting it all sink in.

William pounds his fist into his hand.

WILLIAM

You just let them club you like that?

GRANDPA

Not much I could do. Had my hands behind my back.

JESSICA

Dirty rats.

VIVIAN

Should've called the cops.

GRANDPA

They were the cops. And I kept asking for it.

VIVIAN

Is that why they call it a billy club? Cause they hit you with it.

GRANDPA

I don't think so, Vivian.

VIVIAN

Well, it ain't no Maryann Club.

GRANDPA

Come to think of it. Maybe it was.

INT. JUVENILE CORRECTIONS - NIGHT (WINTER OF 1933)

Seth walks the floor in front of a full room of bunks.

He stops in front of one closest to the bars.

BILLY
What are you lookin' at?

SETH
What you got there?

BILLY
A letter from my mom. What's it to ya?

SETH
Nothin'. Just wonderin' if she mentioned me lately. You're mom and I been passin' time again.

BILLY
You don't know my mom no more.

SETH
Sure I do. She comes in here to see you, don't she?

BILLY
Yeah.

SETH
It's a small town. Not many of us workin'.

BILLY
So? That don't mean nothin'.

SETH
You think she comes out here to this place just to see a punk kid like you? Me with a steady job now and all. It's tough out there these days on your own. Especially tough for a pretty lady like your mom, with a mortgage to pay and no steady income. Might have to move in, put that house in my name, to keep the banks from gettin' it. But I'll have ta get real close to your momma before I let myself do that.

BILLY
Shut up. You ain't taken over that house. My dad built it. And I'll be raisin' my kids in it someday.

SETH
What did you say, Snowball?

BILLY

I said shut your big fat trap, you lowlife bug sucker. And if I find you been talkin' to my mom behind my back, I'll....

SETH

You'll what? Pound your head on these bars when I throw your momma out in the snow?

Billy rushes the bars and SPITS out through them.

And Seth CLUNKS him on the head with his billy club again.

Billy falls back onto the floor of his cell.

His mother's letter crumpled in his hand.

Seth reaches in and grabs it.

SETH

Sleep tight, Snowball. I'll tell your momma you said goodbye.

The other CELL MATES look up from their beds.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The kids sniff. Vivian starts to cry.

Grandpa picks her up. Vivian touches an old scar on Grandpa's receding forehead.

GRANDPA

It's okay. It's okay. He didn't hurt me none. Just a stitch.

WILLIAM

I hope you got even with that cockroach.

GRANDPA

Don't worry. I was biding my time. I knew what I had to do. He was after the house. Was gonna take it over somehow when the bank foreclosed and throw my momma and me out if she didn't like it.

JESSICA

He could do that?

GRANDPA

It was hard times. A lot of people where losing their homes. Being taken advantage of. Mom hadn't heard from my dad in over a year. Was taking in laundry just to get by. I knew I had to get out. I had to go help my mom keep the house long enough for my dad to get back.

VIVIAN

Your daddy was comin' back?

GRANDPA

I hadn't given up hope. Even if my momma had. He said he would, and I believed him. But at the time I didn't know he was halfway around the world in as much trouble as me.

VIVIAN

Like father like son.

GRANDPA

Worse. He got shipwrecked.

WILLIAM

Wow. But how could you help? You had another year to go, at least.

GRANDPA

Christmas was coming. And I knew just what I was gonna do. It was my only chance.

VIVIAN

You were gonna ask Santa for help?

GRANDPA

Well, yeah, only I didn't know it at the time.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT (1933 - CHRISTMAS EVE)

Christmas Mass is taking place and the pews are full of troubled youths.

Billy is on the end nearest the door.

He looks over.

Seth is by the side exit. He's with another GUARD who leans in.

GUARD
I got to use the head.

Seth points down the hall.

SETH
Hurry up. We leave in ten. The moment this nonsense is over.

Seth looks back.

And Billy is gone.

Seth makes a move to find him.

And a Bible comes flying out of the dark and HITS him on the side of the head. Pushing his forehead into a cement pillar.

He takes a step, wobbles and goes down.

Billy is on him in a flash.

Grabbing up his club.

And HITTING him with it good.

The other Guard comes back.

GUARD
Hey! Get off him.

Billy runs for it.

And out the door.

The rest of the kids rush the door.

The Guard draws his gun. Pointing it at them.

GAURD
Back! Back in your seats.

The kids all stop.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

It's snowing. Church bells RING.

Billy's running as fast as he can.

WHISTLES start blowing.

A BUS PASSES by and Billy jumps on the back of it and off he goes.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

The bus stops to pick up people and Billy jumps off.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

He runs down an alley and hides.

Listening, making sure no one is chasing him.

It's cold. He's got a thin jacket on.

He looks up and sees a window lit up in an apartment above.

There's a fire escape.

Billy pulls it down and climbs.

EXT. SECOND FLOOR WINDOW - NIGHT

Billy looks in.

A MAN sits in the next room in a bathtub smoking a cigar, with his back to the door.

On the dresser is his wallet and a watch.

On the bed are his expensive jacket and clothes.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Billy slides the window open.

Climbs inside.

And grabs up the coat.

Then makes it to the dresser.

He puts the watch around his wrist.

And about to grab up the wallet when...

CLICK.

MAN

Touch my wallet, kid, and I put a hole right through ya.

Billy turns to find JOHN DILLINGER still sitting in the tub, but now with a gun aimed at him.

DILLINGER

You didn't think I'd feel the draft from the open window?

BILLY

Guess I wasn't thinkin'.

DILLINGER

(realizing)

Heck, you're The Snowball Kid. You held all them 20 cops at bay with just snowballs a couple years back.

BILLY

There was only four I remember. But that's me, I reckon.

DILLINGER

Reckon nothing. I read all about you. Papers never get it right. Make up what ain't big enough to print. Heck, your story topped my robbing two banks in two national papers.

BILLY

It did?

DILLINGER

Heck ya. Ten year-old smacking cops with snowballs. I'm sure they heard it coast to coast. I got a hoot out of it myself.

BILLY

Pretty dumb, I guess. Didn't know that it made it beyond the locals.

DILLINGER

Nobody told ya? You and that blue bike was famous?

BILLY

I never heard that.

DILLINGER

Dang, News Wires got a hold of it.
Had your picture front page. Hey,
what you got there?

BILLY

Nothing.

DILLINGER

Isn't that my watch and coat?

Billy looks down at his wrist. Takes it off.

BILLY

Yeah, here. Sorry.

Pulls the coat off.

Dillinger gets out of the tub. Grabs a towel.

DILLINGER

No, Snowball. You keep it. It's
cold out. What'd you do, break
out?

BILLY

Yeah, sort of. Need to help my mom
keep the house. Some guard up at
the institution is trin' to take it
from us.

DILLINGER

Dang kid, if you ain't the bunch.
Listen, I ain't got but two dollars
in the wallet. But you can have
it. Go ahead, pick up the wallet.

Billy picks up the wallet. Opens it. Shocked at what he
sees.

BILLY

You're... you're Mr. Dillinger,
John Dillinger? The famous bank
robber?

Drops the wallet back on the dresser.

DILLINGER

Yeah, that's me, kid. But don't go
blabbin' it. Take the money. Go
on. I got plans for more. Look
me up if you're ever needin' a job.
But let me tell you a little advise.
(MORE)

DILLINGER (cont'd)

Go it straight for as long as you can, if you love your momma. It's no good on the lamb. You'll just break her heart. And it's not nearly as good as them writers make it out to be. Look at me. All alone on Christmas Eve.

BILLY

I gotta do what I gotta do.

Dillinger comes into the room with the gun.

And Billy dives back out the window with only the watch.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Billy sliding down the ladder.

Dillinger comes to the window.

DILLINGER

Hey, Snowball, come back. I ain't gonna hurt ya. Hey, kid.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Billy runs down the alley.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Billy runs out into the street and stops.

Looking both ways.

Seth and some other GUARDS are coming about a hundred feet away.

SETH

There he is.

Billy runs for it.

SETH

Snowball. We'll shoot you dead, boy. Last chance.

Billy keeps on running.

EXT. DOWNTOWN KOKOMO STORE FRONT - NIGHT

Small town Christmas.

Lights a glow.

Snow falling.

Sleigh bells RINGING.

CAROLERS someplace nearby.

On the corner a SALVATION ARMY SANTA bends packing up his bell and bucket.

A sudden panic on his face...

...as Billy runs SMACK into him... knocking him on his back.

BILLY
Watch it, fatty!

Billy picks himself up, kicks Santa... and dashes off.

Moments later, Seth and the other Guards dash past.

Blowing their WHISTLES!

Knocking Santa back into a snow pile.

The small crowd of shoppers turn to watch the chase.

None bothering to help up The Salvation Army Santa as he rolls over onto his fake tummy.

So, Santa has to pick himself up.

Insulted if nothing else.

He goes about picking up his things.

A new CLANK in his bucket.

He looks, big surprise!

Reaches in and pulls out Dillinger's watch. Bites it.

SALVATION ARM SANTA
Real gold. Well marry Christmas to me.

He looks around.

All clear.

Puts it on.

And hurries around the corner.

Off in the distance more WHISTLES blow and harried YELLING fades into the snowy night.

As once again the SOUNDS of Christmas overcome the moment.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Grandpa gets to his feet.

WILLIAM

Wait. Where you going?

GRANDPA

I got to use the little boys room.

WILLIAM

I still don't see what this John Dillinger has to do with the real Santa.

JESSICA

Didn't you hear. He ran into him.

WILLIAM

Didn't you hear? He was a Salvation Arm Santa.

VIVIAN

Who's John dil pickle anyway?

GRANDMA

John Dillinger was a very bad man. Robbed banks, and was on the lamb from supposedly killing an officer until they shot him outside a theater in 1934.

JESSICA

Santa Clause and famous Bank Robbers and riding lambs. Maybe Grandpa is pulling our fingers.

Grandpa comes back out.

GRANDPA

Now where was I?

VIVIAN

You were pulling our fingers again.

GRANDPA

What?

WILLIAM

Come on, Grandpa. Salvation Arm
Santas ain't real Santas.

VIVIAN

Yeah. They're counter misfits
Santas.

GRANDPA

Hold on, I didn't say he was. You
see, I wanted to go see my mom, for
Christmas. Her letter said she was
about to lose this house. And still
hadn't heard from my dad. But I
needed cash to help her keep it. So
I needed Dillinger's watch back. So
I could hock it.

WILLIAM

Come on, Grandpa. You said you were
only in the local papers. Now even
bank robbers knew who you were?

GRANDPA

What did I know. I was twelve then.
And behind bars for two years. But I
was out. And I didn't want to get
caught with the watch. In case that
crumb Seth caught up with me. So I
stuck it in the Salvation Santa's
bucket. Plannin' on comin' back for
it if I got away. And I did. So I
thought.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Billy cuts down an alley only to find it comes to a dead end.

There's three doors. One on each building, but they're all
locked.

And the walls are too wet and impossible to climb.

Seth and the other Guards fill the alley.

SETH

Come on. We'll teach this kid a lesson he'll never forget.

They pullout their clubs.

Billy looks around. There's still nowhere to go.

The Guards march down the alley.

Closer and closer.

BILLY

Come on, I'll take you on one at a time.

SETH

It's too late for that, Snowball. We're gonna make sure you never run again.

Billy starts picking up rocks and throwing them.

Getting the guards good. But not good enough to stop them.

The guards get about ten feet away.

Billy's got nothing else to throw.

GUARD

Ain't this the kid whose momma you been sniffin' around?

Seth makes sure his gloves are on nice and tight.

SETH

Yeah and I'm about to get him out of the way for good. You guys just need to hold him down.

Just then a door opens up with a KITCHEN GUY taking out the trash.

Billy sneaks past him without being seen because the guy has his eyes on the Guards.

The Guards rush the Kitchen Guy.

KITCHEN GUY

Hey, what is this?

SETH

You fool. You let him loose.

KITCHEN GUY
Who's loose? I didn't see nobody.

SETH
Out of the way.

The Kitchen Guy steps in their way.

KITCHEN GUY
Hey, that's not the way in. You
need a reservation from out front.
Mr. Deluca won't like it.

SETH
We got your reservation.

They push him out of the way.

EXT. FRONT OF DELUCA'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The doors close behind him and he sticks the cane in the door handles.

POUNDING from inside.

The VALET turns after letting someone out of a cab.

VALET
Hey, what are you doing?

BILLY
Sorry, mister, there's guys in
there tryin' to steal my mom's
house. I got to get home.

The Valet holds open the cab door.

VALET
Get out of here kid.

BILLY
With pleasure.

Billy jumps into the back of the cab and it drives away.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

The CABBY drives thinking he's got a fair.

CABBY

Yeah, so where can I drop you,
buddy?

He looks in the mirror.

CABBY

Hey, kid, what do you think you're
doing back there?

BILLY

Just keep drivin' or I plug you
through the seat.

CABBY

Okay, okay. I don't want no
trouble.

BILLY

Good. Go around the block. Get
back on Main. Out front of the
department store. There was a
Santa. Find him.

CABBY

Santa? Dang, kid, ain't nobody told
ya those guys ain't really Santa?

BILLY

Don't be a wise guy. Just find him.
He's got somethin' John Dillinger
gave me. And I'm gettin' it back.

CABBY

Dillinger? Holy... okay, okay...
I know who you're looking for.

EXT. ABANDON STREET - NIGHT

Loaded down with last minute gifts, SANTA CLAUS hurries down
the street.

He drops his keys in his haste to open his car door.

SANTA

Oh my, this just isn't right. I'm
running so behind tonight.

He drops the load of wrapped packages as he hunts for the
keys in the snow.

To his delight, he finally spies them. A twinkle in his eye.

It isn't the same Santa after all. Bending down to pick up the keys.

A rude heavy boot steps in his way.

BILLY
Not so fast, fatso.

Santa looks up to find Billy Tucker menacing a pretend pistol in his pocket -- aimed at him.

BILLY
Hand over the watch.

SANTA
But I don't have a watch.

Santa shows him his arm. No watch.

BILLY
I'm talkin' about the one I put in your bucket.

SANTA
My bucket?

BILLY
Don't play dumb with me, fatso. I dropped a gold watch in your bucket. Now cough it up. Or I plug you right here.

SANTA
Young man --

BILLY
-- One, two, three --

SANTA
-- Wait, I'm sure I have something here.

Santa reaches into the pile of gifts he was carrying. Now spread out in the snow.

SANTA
(proudly)
It's not gold, but I'm sure you'll find the time to use it.

BILLY
What is it?

SANTA

A book. The Meaning Of Christmas.
I wrote it myself.

BILLY

A book? Here's a new chapter for ya,
fatty. Give me my gold watch back
or I shoot your fat butt. End of
Christmas story. You get *my* meanin'?

SANTA

Obviously, you need this book more
than you know. The meaning of
Christmas is in the giving, not in
the taking.

BILLY

Have you lost your marbles?

SANTA

Oh no, I have a wonderful set right
here.

Santa pulls out a beautiful silk bag filled with marbles.

SANTA

Perhaps you might...

Billy slaps the marbles and they go flying.

Santa goes after them.

SANTA

Oh my, this just won't do at all.
I have Matthew Thomas, a very good
boy, waiting for those -- since he
took sick in July.

Billy can't believe this.

The fat old fool actually scrambles around in the snow
picking up the marbles.

Billy reaches into his pocket and points his fake pistol at
Santa again.

BILLY

Stop picking up marbles.

SANTA

But you don't understand, Billy.

BILLY
Who told you my name?

SANTA
I know everyone's name.

BILLY
Yeah right, fatso. Get up.

Santa rises. An honest to God twinkle in his eye.

SANTA
Your mother won't like this tone.

BILLY
Shut up. I'm tryin' to help her.
Now turn around.

Santa does.

Billy frisks him.

BILLY
Man, you're a lard butt. People
are starvin'. You ever think about
maybe sharin' a meal? Where's the
wallet?

SANTA
Wallet? Oh, I have a nice one
right here. It's for Mr. Waters,
but....

Santa hands over a small package.

BILLY
Listen fatso, I'm givin' you a
count to nothin'. Where's your
wallet?

SANTA
I don't personally carry one. Makes
me hunch in the sleigh. I do have a
swell change purse. But I believe I
left it in my --

BILLY
-- Change purse? What are you, an
old lady?

SANTA
It was a gift. From Mrs. Clause.
Who is expecting....

Billy looks at the car.

BILLY
This your ride?

SANTA
Oh yes, a beauty isn't she. Dual
exhaust and real leather trim...
she can really fly. But --

BILLY
-- But nothin'. Give me the keys.

SANTA
Oh, all right, but you really don't
understand, Billy.

BILLY
That's it. How do you know who I
am? You see my picture in the
paper, or somethin'?

SANTA
I know everyone. See I have a list.

Santa pulls out a great big list, seemingly from out of the
air.

SANTA
Let's see. Billy Tucker. AKA The
Snowball Kid. Oh my, you've been a
very naught boy this year... again.
Hit a guard. Ran from the church
to escape Reform School? Definitely
not away to get on my good list.

BILLY
Look, I don't know... ah heck.
You're comin' with me. Get in.

Billy pushes Santa into his car and gets behind the wheel.

INT. SANTA'S CAR - NIGHT

Billy starts the car.

Throws it in gear.

BILLY

I was gonna let you go, but no.
You had to be difficult. I don't
know what crazy game you're playin',
but I can't leave you wanderin'
Kokomo tellin' the cops where I
went.

SANTA

Billy --

BILLY

-- Shut up! I don't know who you
think you are... but believin' in
Santa Claus only got me put behind
bars. So as far as I'm concerned
he's nothin' but fatsos like you
beggin' for change on street corners.

SANTA

But I am Santa Claus. Those others
are just fightin' a good cause.

BILLY

Yeah, and I'm The Snowball Kid.
And I'm fightin' my good cause.
Helpin' my mom. Now shut up.
Look out the window or somethin'.

SANTA

Actually, Billy Tucker from 4387
Pennsylvania Street, with the two
maple trees your daddy planted out
front. And the swing in the back
yard. You used to write me honest
letters. Nice penmanship, too.
Remember your blue bike. That was
me. I left you that myself when
you were just five.

BILLY

Blue bike? You know about my blue
bike?

SANTA

Of course. We all know how much
you loved your blue bike. You took
such great care of it. One of the
most sincere letters I ever received.
You were very proud of it, weren't
you.

BILLY

Then you ought'a know my mom's friend tried to give it to his dumb kid for Christmas. You read it all in the paper, didn't you. Saw my picture, too.

SANTA

It did get some press. But you outgrew it. Pity you threw it off the bridge. Were some good miles still on that bike.

BILLY

It was still mine. And no one was takin' my bike. It was given to me.

SANTA

Believe me, I know. Is that why I haven't gotten a letter from you these past two years? Because your mother's friend tried to give your blue bike away?

BILLY

No. Because he told me ten-year-olds don't go around writin' stupid letters to someone who doesn't exist. So I could forget about the things I wanted. And be happy with the things I got.

SANTA

Like sweaters and socks. School things.

BILLY

And stupid books about the dumb meaning of Christmas.

Billy's about to pull the car into the street.

When a police car pulls along side.

Billy scrunches in the seat.

He points his fake gun in his pocket at Santa.

BILLY

I'll plug ya, you say I'm here.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Officer Charley White rolls down his window.

CHARLEY
Marry Christmas, Santa.

Santa leans across the seat to wave.

SANTA
Marry Christmas to you, Officer
White.

CHARLEY
I'm lookin' for a mixed-up kid.
A Billy Tucker. You see anyone
run past here?

SANTA
Run past? You mean down this
street?

CHARLEY
Well, or any other street.

SANTA
I saw some kids running on the
other block. Didn't look mixed-up
to me. But no one running on this
one. Not tonight.

CHARLEY
Okay. Get yourself home safely.

SANTA
Thank you, Officer White. Thank
Tammy for the nice letter for me.
And don't forget my milk and
cookies again this year. Or there
will be coal in your stocking.

Charley LAUGHS, stops, looks back. Thinks. Shakes his head.
Rolls up the window.

CHARLEY
Naaaah.

Charley drives away.

INT. SANTA'S CAR - NIGHT

Billy sits back up in the seat. Makes sure it's safe.

BILLY

Thanks.

Puts the car in drive and pulls away from the curb.

Santa is looking around the car.

SANTA

Oh my.

BILLY

Now what?

SANTA

We've left all my presents out in the street.

BILLY

Will you shut up about the presents.

Billy puts his hand back in his pocket and points it back at Santa.

BILLY

Now, where's my watch?

SANTA

I don't have the watch, Billy. And stealing it doesn't make it yours. Or Mr. Dillinger's.

BILLY

Okay, so you know John Dillinger gave it to me. All that will get you is one last ride out of Kokomo.

Billy keeps driving. Comes to a stop sign.

Thinking about which way to go.

BILLY

Okay, so he's the one who told you all about meeting me. Right? You a friend of his? Watching the bank. Is that what this is? Tell me!

SANTA

You're not going to harm me, Billy. So why don't you take your finger out of your pocket before you break a nail.

BILLY

Yeah, you gonna take this from me?

SANTA

Of course not. I'm a giver not a taker.

BILLY

Yeah well, keep in mind that what's in my pocket says I'm Santa and you're nothing more than a fat old man begging for his life.

Billy turns the corner.

He stops again.

He's momentarily not sure where he is.

SANTA

I'm afraid you've managed to take a wrong turn somewhere. Would you like to talk about it?

BILLY

I jack you... and you want to talk. I'm dangerous. I'm mean. I'm no good. I'm a powder-keg itchin' for a match. Ask the cops, they'll tell ya. I ain't been good since I threw my bike off that bridge. And took on all them coppers. And I ain't likely to start tonight just because it's Christmas again.

SANTA

Technically, not yet.

Billy puts the car back in gear. Makes a turn.

BILLY

Christmas ain't nothing but bull anyhow. So I'm doing you a favor, fatso. You're sitting this one out.

SANTA

Revenge won't bring back your blue bike, Billy. There's always bad karma to repay.

BILLY

Listen, you old fool. I'm takin' you to the bridge. Droppin' you off and I'm drivin' this car as far as it'll take me and sellin' it.

SANTA

Oh, I'm afraid this car will take you a lot farther than you've ever imagined. It's a magic sleigh, you know.

BILLY

Keep it up, fatso. Where's the money from your bucket?

SANTA

I've never used a bucket. But I do have a bag of important documents here somewhere.

Santa opens the glove box.

SANTA

Here it is. What would you like?

BILLY

Start with money. Coins, whatever... give up.

SANTA

I'm sorry. No need for money.

BILLY

You put all that junk back there on store credit?

SANTA

Store credit? Never in my life.

BILLY

You stole them? Good for you, fatso.

SANTA

Of course not. Those were special orders I had made specifically for some very special children.

BILLY

Ain't that special. Well, you ain't got them now.

SANTA

Things are never lost, Billy. Just momentarily misplaced.

Santa reaches into the back seat.

And pulls out the silk sack with the marbles that he had left spread all over the ground.

He holds out the bag of marbles to show Billy.

SANTA

Like you Billy, just momentarily misplaced your sense of direction. You'll figure it out soon enough.

Billy reacts by taking a sudden left.

BILLY

I ain't lost my marbles, fatso. I know exactly where I'm goin'.

EXT. STONE BRIDGE - NIGHT

Billy pulls Santa's car over to the side of the bridge to let Santa out.

But the car slides on the ice and keeps going.

BANG, it goes right through the stone railing and hangs there, with Santa's side of the car teetering off the bridge.

EXT. SIDE OF BRIDGE - NIGHT

Santa's car hangs precariously over the frozen river a hundred feet below.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Billy grips the steering wheel.

BILLY

It ain't my fault, it ain't my....
(sees Santa)
Fatso?

Trying his best not to fall towards Santa.

Santa just sits there slumped to the door.

He looks unconscious.

A big SCREECH of metal as the car slides.

BILLY
Our weight, we're sliding.

Billy reaches over. Shakes Santa

BILLY
Hey you, fatso. Ah, Santa guy?
Yo, fatty!

Billy rolls down the window.

And stretches with all his might to grab snow off the railing
of the bridge.

He smears it on Santa's face.

Santa slowly comes around.

Sees their predicament.

SANTA
Oh, my. This just won't do.

BILLY
Why do you have to be so fat?

SANTA
I'm not fat, Billy. I'm jolly.

BILLY
Meathead, you're fat. You're also
nuts. We're gonna end it here. If
we don't think of somethin' fast.

The car slides further out.

Tipping slowly towards the passenger side.

Billy slides across the seat towards Santa.

But he's still holding onto the steering wheel.

BILLY
Help me.

SANTA

I'm afraid you'll just have to help yourself here, Billy. Saving lives is not in my bag of goods. Spreading joy and hope is my gift to the World.

BILLY

Well, I'd be overjoyed if you helped right about now.

SANTA

Sorry, the consequences of your actions are left to others who'll judge you in the end.

BILLY

Look, if I go -- you go.

SANTA

It doesn't work that way.

The car slides further.

Billy is holding on with all his might. But it does him no good. His fingers slide off the cold steering wheel.

And PLOP, he falls into Santa's lap.

BILLY

This ain't what it seems.

SANTA

Now, what would you like for Christmas, Billy?

BILLY

Your fat rump over to the other side of the car.

SANTA

I'm afraid I can't be of any help to you in this situation. You don't believe in me anymore. And there would be Christmas Spirit to pay if I left you to wander the streets knowing but not believing.

BILLY

You're right about that. I don't believe I'm hearing this. Get your butt over there.

SANTA

If I were to do the one thing that would make you believe in me again, you could never go home.

(rule book appears)

Right here after Snow Men Must Melt. Section Eight. Clause Twelve. Under Who Are Santa's Little Helpers? Where do they come from? And why so short?

BILLY

Wake up, Santa. I go home without money, I go back to Reform School without helpin' my mom. So, mister, if you got wings to fly, start flappin'. 'Cause, I ain't ever goin' home broke.

SANTA

No wings, I'm Old Saint Nick. I need reindeer to fly.

BILLY

I don't care if you're Elliott Ness. If you know how to keep us from falling a hundred feet into that river -- I will follow you to the ends of the earth and back.

SANTA

Oh, I'm afraid there won't be any coming back. The small print. At least not as you know things now. Though next year --

BILLY

-- Whatever. I woke you up. I might've saved you. So just do somethin'. Make me believe, I don't care. Save us.

SANTA

You did wake me up. Huuummm....

Santa pulls out a great big book this time, from nowhere.

Thumbs through the pages.

The weight of the book makes the car SLIDE even further.

BILLY

What are you doin'?

SANTA

Here we are. Clause 333. Acts of self-preservation. It is an obscure clause. But yes, I believe it counts when used in this situation. 'If in keeping another from harm, one's original intent was to save themselves, it should still be construed as an act of goodwill for all. And therefore shall pass as kindness onto another.'

(closes the book)

Well, you might have saved Christmas after all, Billy. Congratulations.

BILLY

Me? Ah, go on, it was a just a.... Never mind, just do somethin'... fast.

SANTA

Do you truly understand what I'm saying, Billy?

BILLY

What? I have to be a dumb elf or something?

SANTA

Elf's are not dumb.

BILLY

Wait, I'm not gonna be your mascot or anything weird like that.

SANTA

Billy, I'm Santa Claus. I've got to get Christmas started. Now I can't hang around with you all night. And if I reveal the truth to you here, I'll have to take you with me.

BILLY

What's the alternative? I wake up in some bed or something?

SANTA

Yes, a riverbed. After you plunge, I'm afraid down there. But not till Spring. After the thaw. And you'll only be a ghost of your former self.

BILLY

With you?

SANTA

Oh, no, I'm afraid I'll have to leave you to your own demise. I'm sorry. Saving life --

BILLY

-- Yeah, yeah, I heard you the first time. Just show me.

SANTA

You'll have to truly believe in me.

BILLY

Come on. Okay, you're Santa Claus, ho, ho, ho.

SANTA

I'm sorry. It won't work. I know you don't believe in me any longer. The times. And that Seth Jones really did a number on you. So many have given up hope. But I do have a consolation gift for you.

Santa rummages inside his coat pocket.

And pulls out a large chunk of coal.

It makes the car lean even further.

BILLY

Holy... where'd you get that?

SANTA

Actually, I had meant to give you this later in the evening. In your cell. But since you won't be able to receive it then. You might as well take it now. Merry Christmas, Billy. Ho, ho, ho.

Santa hands the coal to Billy.

Billy drops it and it slams against the door.

And the car begins to make its last slide over the edge.

Billy slams against the door as well.

He looks back to find Santa sitting behind the wheel.

Santa reaches for the keys.

SANTA

So long, Billy. Coal is but a diamond in the rough. It's a metaphor, in case you missed it.

BILLY

Wait.

EXT. SANTA'S CAR - NIGHT

The door opens and Billy slides out.

He's gripping the door jam, just hanging there.

The coal falls the hundred feet below.

EXT. FROZEN RIVER - NIGHT

SPLASH!

The coal breaks right through the ice and into the cold rushing river below.

INT. SANTA'S CAR - NIGHT

Billy looks back up at Santa. He can't climb in.

BILLY

Okay. Make me believe. Anything. I'll go anywhere. I don't want to end up like my blue bike. Crushed below.

SANTA

Forever?

BILLY

Forever. On the death of my blue bike. I swear.

SANTA

You'll need to sign this.

Santa pulls out a large form from nowhere. Places it on the seat before Billy.

BILLY

I don't...

Santa hands him a pen.

Billy can't grab it because he's holding on for dear life.
So he opens his mouth.

SANTA
It'll have to do.

BILLY
Give it to me.

Billy signs the form, holding the pen with his mouth.

SANTA
And here.

EXT. SANTA'S CAR - NIGHT

The car slowly slides off the bridge and down they go.

INT. SANTA'S CAR - NIGHT

Billy's eyes are wide open in shock...

SANTA
And here.

... as he writes with his mouth.

Spits the pen out.

Santa catches the pen and takes the form.

Folds it slowly as they continue to fall.

Then makes it disappear.

He calmly hits a button on the dash.

EXT. SANTA'S CAR/SLEIGH - NIGHT

In a FLASH the car TURNS INTO Santa's Sleigh just before
hitting the icy river.

And stops.

With all the REINDEER and trimmings.

And just like that Santa tips the sleigh the other way.

And Billy tumbles in, beside Santa.

INT. SANTA'S SLEIGH - NIGHT

Billy looks down.

EXT. SANTA'S SLEIGH - NIGHT

They are hovering JUST above the river.

INT. SANTA'S SLEIGH - NIGHT

Then the Sleigh slowly rises to even itself with the bridge.

Billy looks back at Santa.

He looks at the reindeer.

Then to the enormous bag of gifts in the back.

SANTA

Do you believe in Christmas now,
Billy?

BILLY

Ah....

SANTA

Tell you what. One more small gift.

BILLY

Ah....

SANTA

If you still don't believe, or want
to come. You can leave.

BILLY

How?

SANTA

You know. Just leave.

BILLY

You mean, jump? That's cold, Santa.

SANTA

It would be a tragic accident, to be
sure.

(MORE)

SANTA (cont'd)

Young man escapes from Reform School, robs a wanted hood to raise money to save his mother, but plunges a hundred feet to his death at the bottom of a frozen river to rejoin his beloved childhood blue bike... forever.

BILLY

No way. Not me. I saved you. I saved Christmas. Didn't I? What kind of a thanks is jump to your death?

SANTA

Well, then Billy Tucker. Welcome to the wonderful world of Christmas. Here's your new hat. And you're required to memorize my book, 'The Meaning Of Christmas.' There *will* be a test.

Santa hands Billy an Elf's hat and the book.

Billy takes it and looks at his reflection TRANSFORM in a large shinny buckle on the book's cover.

He's now an Elf.

Ears and all.

And he's only three feet tall.

BILLY

I'm a friggin'....

SANTA

Ah, ah ah, no swearing from Santa's little helpers. Children are always listening.

BILLY

I jacked the real Santa Claus?

SANTA

That you did, Billy. That you did.

BILLY

And the North Pole, it's up there.

SANTA

Not as you'd imagine.

BILLY
This is crazy.

SANTA
Perhaps, but it's saved your life.

Santa uses his reins to make his reindeer fly.
And up into the air they go.
As they ZOOM off into the distance.

SANTA
On Dancer on Prancer....

BILLY
No no no.

SANTA
It's ho-ho-ho, Billy You'll get
the hang of it. Hang on.

A hard bank into the snowy ski.

BILLY
Ah! I JACKED SANTA CLAUS!

And they fade into the Christmas Eve Night.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The kids are all laughing.

WILLIAM
Yeah, that's wild, Grandpa. I knew
it was all made up.

JESSICA
Grandpa....

GRANDPA
Oh, I didn't make it up.

VIVIAN
Where's your elf ears?

JESSICA
Yeah, and how did you grow back
from three feet tall?

WILLIAM
Grandma, is he making it all up?

Grandma puts down her knitting.

GRANDMA
Grandpa stopped lying years ago.
It was part of the deal, dear.

WILLIAM
What deal?

GRANDPA
Hold on to your reindeer, I'm
getting to that.

VIVIAN
We don't have any reindeer. Santa
does.

GRANDPA
Yes he does. Magical ones. And a
few downright ornery.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE - NIGHT

Santa's Sleigh is on top of the house.

Billy is there going through Santa's list.

He's pulling out packages.

Santa puts them in a smaller sac, moves to the chimney.

And disappears.

BILLY
This is insane, I can barely read
your handwritin'.
(looks around)
Santa?

No Santa.

Santa suddenly appears next to him.

Billy nearly jumps out of his costume.

And the sleigh takes off.

Billy holding on for dear life.

BILLY
Wwwwwwwwhere'd you get your
license? The South Pole?

EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The sleigh lands on the roof. Santa jumps out.

BILLY
Wait. This is my house.

SANTA
Not for long, I'm afraid.

BILLY
We got to do something about it.

SANTA
There's not much we can do but
leave her the gifts she's asked
for.

Santa takes his little bag and walks to the chimney. And disappears.

Billy jumps out of the sleigh.

The reindeer look at him.

BILLY
What are you lookin' at, Dasher?

Dasher GRUNTS and KICKS Billy.

And he immediately slides off the roof

BILLY
You hay burnin' excuse of a...
...reeeeeeindear!

INT. BILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Santa is there beside the fireplace filling the single stocking with two small gifts.

Outside the window Billy falls into a snow bank.

Santa sees this.

The other stocking, with Billy's name on it, Santa puts a lump of coal.

Santa's about to leave.

Billy TAPS on the window.

Santa goes over and the window opens.

SANTA

You're not supposed to get out of the sleigh, Billy. Dasher doesn't like it.

BILLY

No kiddin'. Look, we got to help.

Billy climbs in. It's not easy, only being three feet tall.

SANTA

Like I said, there isn't much we can do. The bank has already sent her the paper to take back the house. And she hasn't asked for my help.

BILLY

Well, I'm askin'.

SANTA

Maybe next year.

Billy walks to the bedroom door. Opens it.

Inside his mother sleeps in her bed.

Billy walks to the side of the bed.

BILLY

Mom?

Santa comes in.

SANTA

She can't hear you, Billy.

BILLY

What, am I a ghost?

SANTA

As long as you're with me, and we're delivering presents, you're in a different dimension.

BILLY

But she needs me.

SANTA

You should've thought of that two years ago.

BILLY

Please.

Santa shakes his head.

BILLY

Then tell me this. Is Seth Jones
on your naughty list? Is he
capable of hurtin' my mom?

Santa's list appears. He starts looking down it.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Grandpa is interrupted by William.

WILLIAM

Different dimension? What a cop
out.

JESSICA

Yeah, what a finger pulling.

VIVIAN

Are we talking sci-fi? Because
Mommy doesn't let me watch that.

GRANDPA

I'm not expecting you to fully
understand. Just to listen.

WILLIAM

So, why aren't you three feet tall
now?

GRANDPA

I'm gettin' to that. But it's
late. Let's go to bed.

CHILDREN

No!

GRANDPA

Alright then. Quit interrupting.
I was a three foot elf and there
wasn't much I could do about it.
At least that's what I was led to
believe.

VIVIAN

Santa lied?

GRANDPA

Of course not. Situations can change.

JESSICA

Did they?

GRANDPA

Let's just say, Seth Jones was never the same after he got a load of little old me.

JESSICA

But you just said....

WILLIAM

Never mind her. So Seth --

GRANDPA

-- stopped by to make my mom sign some bank papers. 'Cause he knew I was on my way and wanted to make sure it got done before I got in the way. He was taking the house that night. One way or the other.

WILLIAM

He was gonna hurt your mother?

EXT. TUCKER HOME - NIGHT

Seth shows up out front in his car. He gets out and looks around.

Making sure no one sees him. He checks the mailbox. It's empty.

So he goes up and KNOCKS on the door.

It opens immediately.

Seth steps back. Shocked if not confused.

Because standing in the door is three foot tall Billy Tucker.

BILLY

Yeah, I know what you're thinkin'. The hat makes me look short.

SETH

Heck I am. Who are you?

Billy comes out onto the porch.

Seth steps back, looking again to see if anyone else is watching.

Billy shuts the door.

BILLY

You ain't takin' my mom's house,
Seth. Now or ever.

SETH

This some kind of joke?

Seth draws his gun.

BILLY

You hear me laughin'? You gonna
shoot Santa's little helper? Big
mean man. Killin' an elf. What
will all the kiddies say up at the
big house? You tellin' us all
these years that Santa ain't real.

Seth points the gun.

SETH

He ain't real. Get over it.

BILLY

Then how do you explain these?

Billy takes off his hat, and shows Seth his elf ears.

SETH

So what?

BILLY

So, Santa did give me that bike. He
told me himself, 'cause he liked my
letter. Said I was a good boy.
Until you came along. Messin' with
my head. Tryin' to get me out of
the way. So you can have my mom to
yourself and take my dad's house.

SETH

That's crazy talk. You got no
proof of that.

BILLY

Sure I do. You did this to me,
Seth. You knew the one thing that
would push me over the edge was to
take my bike, and give it to your
kid. You set me up, made me look
bad, so they could put me away.
And I don't know how you did it.
But I get the feelin' somehow you
made sure we didn't hear from Dad.
That we didn't get his letters.
Maybe even read them yourself.
And maybe that's how you know so
much about us. About this house.

SETH

That's a lie.

Billy looks out at the mailbox at the street.

BILLY

I ain't got no proof yet. But I'll
find it. 'Cause I bet you've been
takin' our mail. Hiding letters up
at your place. Maybe even money
he's been sendin'.

SETH

That's ridicules. I never took
nothin'. And I never made you do
anythin'. Now get away from the
door.

BILLY

You're gonna have to go through me.

Seth suddenly steps closer to hit Billy with the gun.

And Billy, being three feet tall, punches Seth in the
crackers.

Seth goes down to his knees.

BILLY

How's that for Christmas Bells?
Want some more jollies?

SETH

You little... I'll kill you and
your mom, if I have to. She'll
sign that house over to me, or
else.

Billy punches Seth in the mouth.

BILLY

Like the sound of my Christmas
Carroll? Here's another tune you
might know.

Billy punches Seth in the eye.

Suddenly Seth reaches out and grabs Billy around the throat.

And starts choking him.

SETH

Listen, you stupid little freak.

BILLY

Elf's are not stupid.

Suddenly FLASH, FLASH, FLASH. As the Photographer jumps out
from beside the house.

Seth is stunned to be there choking this... Elf and getting
his picture taken.

But he doesn't stop choking Billy.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Sorry, Billy, I got lost. So,
you're a real elf?

BILLY

You mind gettin' him off me.

SETH

What the heck is going on here?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Kid said he could prove Santa was
real if I helped him save his mom.
So, I called Charley White and his
men. They've been up at your
place. But here they are now.

Charley pulls up in his car. He's got Junior, Abraham and
Gary with him.

Seth stands up with Billy, his arm around his throat.

BILLY

Hey, he's killing me!

SETH

Back off, Charley. I just come by for paperwork that needs signed.

CHARLEY

On Christmas Eve, Seth?

ABRAHAM

Put the elf down, and move away from the house.

JOUIOR

I ain't hearin' this.

GARY

Billy is that really you?

The Photographer continues to take pictures.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Yeah, it's Billy Tucker. Santa turned him into an elf just like he said. This is gonna go national. Snowball Kid escapes and turns into an elf to save his mother's house from the guard who put him away. Man, I couldn't make up this stuff.

CHARLEY

Put the camera down, Jude. Now Seth. We're just as confused as you are. So put the... just put Billy down.

Seth doesn't.

JUNIOR

We found Will Tucker's mail up at your place, Seth. We got a whole stack of letters and bank drafts.

Seth finally drops Billy.

Billy roles over holding his throat.

Charley comes up, taking Seth's gun.

Charley takes Seth's arm and walks him down to the other cops.

Junior points back up at the porch.

And Billy is sitting there back to his normal self. Just a twelve-year-old kid again.

Mrs. Tucker opens the door.

Billy springs to his feet.

BILLY

Mom!

MRS. TUCKER

Billy!

They hug in the door.

The cops all stand there.

Seth hangs his head.

The Photographer takes their picture.

MRS. TUCKER

What's this all about?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Snowball there, saved your life.

SETH

I wasn't gonna hurt her.

BILLY

Yes he was, Mom. Said he was. I got witnesses to back me, up at Reform School. Said he was gonna make you sign those papers one way or another. It's why he got me out of the way, so he could kick you out once you signed them. And he's been stealing Dad's letters from our mailbox.

MRS. TUCKER

Seth?

SETH

It ain't true, honey, none of it.

MRS. TUCKER

Take him away, Charley.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The kids are all there with their mouths open.

VIVIAN
I gotta pea-pea.

She gets up and runs out of the room.

WILLIAM
Wait. How'd you turn back into a kid?

GRANDPA
Clause three-thirty-five, dash forty-five, A.

JESSICA
You weren't really a bad kid?

GRANDPA
Right. Confused Kid Clause. I was just protecting my mother. Even though I didn't know it at the time. And once I figured it out, and saved her. Santa took me off his naughty list.

Vivian comes back in.

VIVIAN
Wow.

WILLIAM
Come on, Grandpa. What happened to Seth?

GRANDPA
Well, it didn't end there. The day after Christmas they had a special courtroom session with the Judge who put me away. Who was none to happy about it either. But something magical did happen. The one thing I wished for Christmas came true.

JESSICA
You got your blue bike back?

GRANDPA
Even better than that.

Grandma wipes a tear from her eyes.

JESSICA
You crying, Grandma?

Grandma blows her nose.

GRANDMA

Sorry, this part always makes me
cry.

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

The same Judge is there, going over photographs. He's got a
stack of mail.

Seth is there in handcuffs.

Billy and Mrs. Tucker are there.

Jack from the station is there.

Charley, Junior, Gary and Abraham are there.

And THREE KIDS from the Reform School are there.

The Salvation Army Santa is also there. Reluctantly.

JUDGE

Okay, let me see if I get all this
straight. Seth threatened to take
your bike away. The one you say
was given to you by Santa. So you
threw it off the Oki Bridge, and
run off.

BILLY

Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE

Then you stole the corn beef
sandwich of Jack's here, because
he called the police on you for no
reason and you were just hungry?

BILLY

Yes, you're honor. But I didn't
hit him or take any money.

JUDGE

It was some olives that'd fallen
off the back of a truck. That
right, Jack? You stupidly had them
stacked overhead?

JACK

I guess I could've been mistakin'.
Could've been a can or two hit me.

JUDGE

But you stole his truck only
because it was cold and he told the
despatcher at the station a lie
about you robbing him.

BILLY

It still don't make it right, Your
Honor. But I was scared. It was
so cold. And I'm sorry.

JUDGE

As well you should be. But then you
drove the truck into two cop cars
and two pickups because you couldn't
see them blocking the road in the
storm.

BILLY

It was snowin' real hard, You're
Honor. How was I to know?

JUDGE

Is that about right, Officer White?

CHARLEY

Yes, You're Honor. In hindsight it
weren't a good idea. Putting our
vehicles on the road. We didn't see
the truck until he was ten feet
away. There's no way he could've
seen us and stopped in time. No
grown man could've.

JUDGE

But you threw snowballs at these
officers. Didn't you?

BILLY

I wasn't thinkin' straight. I was
angry and scared. I thought I was
acting in self-defense. But I was
wrong. I'm sorry, Your Honor. I
apologize. I'll shovel the station's
walks all winter to make it up. And
work off the damage to Mr. Murphy's
truck.

JUDGE

But after spending two years locked up performing community services, you broke out of detention because Seth there told you he was going to take your mother's house and throw her out in the cold.

BILLY

Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE

And you boys heard him say it?

CELL MATE

Yes. Then he hit Billy with his club.

JUDGE

I see. Hitting a young boy with your night stick, Seth. So at Christmas Mas, Billy, you managed to get away, and climbed into the hotel room of John Dillinger, who gave you his watch. Which you later kindly put into the Salvation Army Bucket of this man? Even though you could've sold it to help your mother.

BILLY

Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE

Is that the way it went down, Sir.

SALVATION SANTA

Yes, Your Honor. In passing.

JUDGE

Well. Then you met real Santa Clause and saved his life from falling off the very spot on Oki Bridge you threw your bike off. And that's how the damage was done to the railing of the bridge. Is that what you'll have this court to believe?

BILLY

Yes, Your Honor. I know it sounds crazy. But then he turned me into a real elf for saving Christmas instead of letting me fall off Oki Bridge. But first his car turned into his sleigh. And reindeer.

JUDGE

I see. And while being an elf you saved your mother from harm and possibly her home from this man? Seth Jones, whom possibly started this whole mess out of greed and corruption in the first place by stealing your daddy's mail and bank drafts?

BILLY

Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE

And I'm to believe all this, because of this article, and these photos splashed on the front page of every paper across the nation.

The Judge holds up a paper. It reads "The Snowball Kid Saves Christmas."

JUDGE

And you wrote this, Mr. Summarily? And took these pictures. And they are indeed real and not staged?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Yes, Your Honor. I stand by my work. The kid's a national hero. Ought to name a Christmas ornament after him. The Snowball. Hang one on every tree.

The Judge folds the paper. Takes off his glasses.

JUDGE

I see. Well then. It looks like, if I don't agree, I'd be telling the whole world that there isn't a real Santa. And I'm not going to do that in my court. So, I suspend your sentence, Billy Tucker, and deem time spent as punishment enough for damaging city property.

(MORE)

JUDGE (cont'd)

You and your mother are free to go.
Case dismissed. Merry Christmas,
everyone.

APPLAUSE breaks out across the courtroom.

The Judge POUNDS his gavel.

JUDGE

However, you Seth Jones, I suggest
you get a lawyer. Take him away.
I'm going home.

The court room breaks out in smiles and cheers.

Billy hugs Mrs. Tucker.

They turn to leave and standing at the door is a tall, good
looking man in a suit and tie.

BILLY

Dad!

Billy runs and jumps into his father's arms. MR. TUCKER hugs
him tight.

Mrs. Tucker stands there. Not sure what to say.

MR. TUCKER

Told you I'd come back.

BILLY

See? I told you too, Mom. He was
sending us letters the whole time.
I sure missed you, Dad. I missed
you so much.

MR. TUCKER

I missed you too, son. And read
about you in all the papers. I'm
so proud of you.

MRS. TUCKER

You back for good.

MR. TUCKER

I'm back for better. Been around
the world and back. Come on,
Snowball. I got a present for you
out side.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

A new car is there. Strapped on top is a brand-new blue bike.

Mrs. Tucker runs down to look at the car.

Billy runs down to look at the bike.

Mr. Tucker comes down the steps to let them in.

MR. TUCKER
Mary Christmas.

BILLY
Marry Christmas, Dad.

MRS. TUCKER
Finally.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Let's have a happy one for the
press. I can see it now. Snowball
and family lives happily ever after.
It'll make it across the nation.

They hug and the Photographer takes their picture.

FLASH!

And they get in and drive away.

INT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - CHRISTMAS MORNING

Grandpa sleeps in his chair. The children are just waking up and coming back into the room.

Their MOM and DAD are with them in pajamas.

The tree is piled with Christmas gifts.

But one in particular is a bright blue bike.

WILLIAM
Look.

Jessica runs over and reads the tag.

JESSICA
It's for Grandpa. From Santa.

Grandma enters and wakes Grandpa.

GRANDMA

It's Christmas, dear. Santa's been here. He brought you something special.

Grandpa gets up as the family all comes to hug him.

He sees the blue bike. And tears well up in his eyes.

Jessica gives him the tag on it.

GRANDPA

(reading from tag)

Marry Christmas, to my favorite elf.

VIVIAN

I bet this is the best Christmas ever.

William pulls a snowball ornament off the tree.

WILLIAM

Look, The Snowball Kid Christmas Ornament. Santa *must* be real.

FADE OUT.

THE END