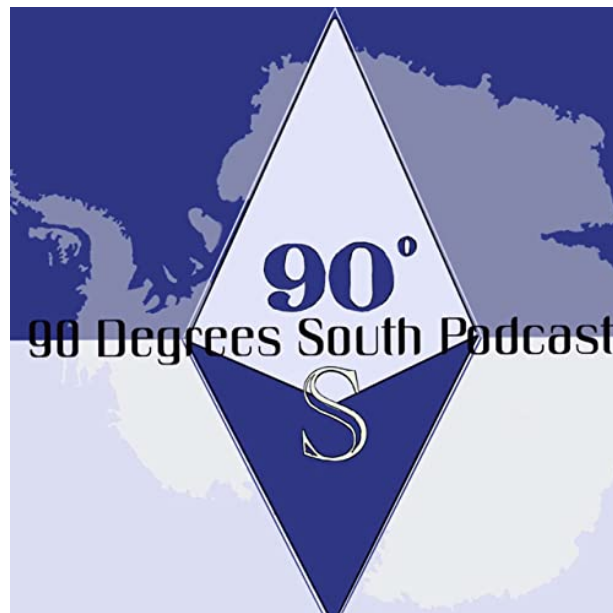


90 Degrees South

SEASON THREE
EPISODE NINE: SANTA ZEKE IS
COMIN' TO TOWN!

DRAFT 1: NOV 09, 2023



by
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BMB Productions LLC

INTRO AND MUSIC

ACT I

JOYCLYN'S RECORDER - RECORDING HAS COMMENCED

**WE HEAR SHOES WALKING DOWN A HALLWAY, THROUGH THE
OPERATIONS CENTER WHERE PEOPLE ARE BUSILY WORKING AWAY.
JOYCLYN IS WALKING WITH PURPOSE.**

CHERYL-LYNN

[SUDDENLY LOOKS UP]

Oh Lord Gladys! You best give me a call back in
five.

SPEAKER LINE HANGS UP.

CHERYL-LYNN

Good morning, Agent Folwer. Doctor Waynewright
is on an important call right this moment.

JOYCLYN

He'll see me now old mother!

**HEALS CONTINUE ON AND WE HEAR THE WHOOSH OF MAGIC AND THE
DOOR FRAME CREAK. JOYCLYN JIGGLES THE DOOR HANDLE TO NO
AVAIL.**

CHERYL-LYNN

That door into the Admin Wing is always getting
sticky this time of year. Oh, it's okay Shug,
they're all just fine in there! I've already
called Zeke and the carpentry crew, and they're
fixin to get it open. Should only take about ten
minutes or so! Why don't you come on back, or
even better. . .I'd be happy to call you over the
P.A. when it's right as rain!

JOYCLYN

[ANNOYED]

Don't Bother!

ANGRY FOOTSTEPS LEAVING OPERATIONS

CHERYL-LYNN

Well bless her heart!

RADIO PAGE SOUND

JOYCLYN
[ALMOST GROWLING]
MISTER KELLEY, WHERE ARE YOU?

RADIO SOUND

THOMAS
[ON COMMS]
Morning agent. I'm in the Logistics arch
conducting a tally report. Everything alright?

RADIO SOUND

JOYCLYN
[SARCASTIC]
Oh, yes! I'm doing quite brilliant this morning.
Was thinking of going for a stroll in the garden
later. **NO EVERYTHING IS NOT BLOODY ALRIGHT YOU
TWIT! WHERE ARE THE DUTY ROSTERS? WHO WAS ON
SHIFT IN THE ARCHES LAST NIGHT?**

RADIO SOUND

THOMAS
[PANICKED ON COMMS]
The um. . .um. . .oh. . .

RADIO SOUND

ZEKE
[ON COMMS]
Why you giving Tommy the business, Spooky Spice?
If you want duty Rosters, you been down here long
enough to know to come to me. I'm happy to hand
them over.

RADIO SOUND

JOYCLYN
[ANNOYED]
I don't remember asking you anything, spanner-
turner!!

RADIO SOUND

ZEKE

[ON COMMS]

[CHUCKLE] Yeah, sounds like you didn't know to really. I'm in the VMF now. Work roster right here. [TAP TAP]. You welcome to it! Gonna let us know what got you all worked up?

FOOTSTEPS CHANGE DIRECTION

JOYCLYN

Something is missing. . .in one of the labs. I want to know who was nearby.

ZEKE

[ON COMMS, CHIDING]

Something goes missing, it's always the help get the blame, huh. Sounds like it the same in England too! Sorry to tell you, but they ain't no labs anywhere down here in the arches. Um. . .which lab, was it that has something missing just. . .you know. . .my curiosity?

THREE BEAT. WALKING STOPS.

RADIO SOUND

ZEKE

[ON COMMS, CHIDING]

You still there Joyclyn? You forget, or is it one of them. . .

RADIO SOUND

NIC

[ON COMMS]

Yeah, Hi! This is Nic! You all are aware this entire conversation is going out over the operations talk group right? I mean. . .I *am* the entertainment and events coordinator, so if you all really want to make this into a show, or like a Podcast. . .Happy to help. But, here on my talk-group. . . can we **NOT**. . please?

THREE BEAT. WALKING RESTARTS.

RADIO SOUND

JOYCLYN

[MAD]

KELLEY! Join Bustamante in the VMF arch. I'll be there momentarily.

RADIO SOUND

BASS

[ON COMMS]

So will I. . .

FOOTSTEPS NOW GOING DOWN BEERCAN STEPS AS WE FADE OUT

ACT II

BASS' RECORDER: RECORDING STARTED

FOOTSTEPS ON THE METAL FLOORING. A DOOR OPENS AND WE HEAR THE TYPICAL WORK SOUNDS FROM THE GARAGE.

ZEKE

Hey Lawman, come to watch the show?

BASS

Sorry it took [DEEP BREATH]. . .so long. Ribs still sore.

ZEKE

Ah hell, no need to rush. We got this! How's the healing going?

BASS

Fine, I'm good buddy. Almost back to full speed.

ZEKE

Said the man who tried to bluff with a pair of threes and the WORST tells.

BASS

Cute Zeke. She say what has her worked up yet? Other than something missing?

ZEKE

Naw. Just came in here, grabbed the Luther clipboard and started writing down names of people who had third shift last night.

TOMMY

She seems. . .extra . . .murder-ry this morning. I was busy enough getting supplies for the party tonight, but thought this was. . .

BASS

No harm, no foul Mister Kelley. Why don't you go back to getting all your arrangements in place. I'll cover for you with Joyclyn!

TOMMY

Oh, I appreciate that Deputy Marshal. Zeke, we had the suit cleaned for you and it's all ready to go. Come pick it up in my office when you're ready.

ZEKE

Looking forward to it Tommy!

QUICK FOOTSTEPS HEADING AWAY.

BASS

Hrm. Been a long time since I've seen her this worked up! Typically, she's just being caustic and trying to shoot some part of me. She's really agitated, huh.

ZEKE

She got that vain in her forehead all throbbing and everything. Just won't say what it is got her all steaming.

FOOTSTEPS OVER

JOYCLYN

[STEAMING]

This all of them?

ZEKE

Everybody working on the night crew and what they working on. Yup!

BASS

Which leads me to Three. Intimidation or assault on any of the station's personal *is* a crime. Unlike you, I have legal jurisdiction and arrest powers. Which leads to four. [THREE BEAT AND GIVE ME BATMAN VOICE] It would be the excuse I've been waiting for.

JOYCLYN

One phone call Marlow, all it would take. To get everything corrected.

BASS

[BATMAN]

And in the process. . .demonstrate your heavily touted and impenetrable security measures, were bypassed in under three months of implementation. . .and by a simpleton? What would that REALLY say. . .about. . .you?

THREE BEAT

ZEKE

There it is! That vain in the forehead again. Damn lawman. . .well played! Shame you can't bring that same skill to poker. Called with a pair of threes; the hell wrong with you?

BASS

Now, given it's the holiday season, and I'm trying my best to be a better person. . .

JOYCLYN

[MAKES FAKE GAG SOUND]

BASS

I'll help you.

THREE BEAT

JOYCLYN

. . .I don't follow.

ZEKE

Whatchu talkin' bout lawman? You get another head injury with the shot to the vest last week?

BASS

Serious! Not making a joke here. If something has been taken or misplaced; I'll help. But that means you have to tell me what's missing, so I know what to look for.

THREE BEAT

JOYCLYN

[THROUGH CLINCHED TEETH]

I'll handle this myself.

STOMPING OFF

BASS

Hey buddy, can you make a copy of yesterday's roster for me? I want to follow up to make sure she's civil with your crew if she speaks with them. [PAUSE] Zeke?

ZEKE

[CONFUSED]

Yeah, still with you. I'm just. . .don't know if you're the lawman or a pod-person? Bass Marlow I know... ain't never would have offered to help, her.

BASS

[CHUCKLES]Well, I was only half truthful there. Christmas time seems to put me in a better mood these days, so. . .trying to be more friendly.

ZEKE

Okay. . .what's the other half, not truthful?

BASS

Do the unexpected. She thinks you'll go left; you go right. She thinks you're gonna zig, you. . .

ZEKE

Make horrible barbeque for the party tonight. I get you now!

BASS

Exactly!

ZEKE

Got to say though. . .I like seeing this side of the lawman! Going get you one of them ugly sweaters to wear?

BASS

Let's; not go that far!

[BOTH CHUCKLE]

ZEKE

You get all the gifts you ordered from Reno when you was in McMurdo?

BASS

Got them all, wrapped and ready to be delivered.

ZEKE

You just slip them in Santa's bag lawman. . .I have it on good authority he gonna get it to all the good kids tonight!

BASS

See ya tonight buddy!

FOOTSTEPS OUT

BASS' RECORDER: RECORDING STOPPED.

ACT III

FADE IN

WE'RE IN A CONFERENCE ROOM. THE BACKGROUND NOISE IS DIFFERENT THAN THE STATION. IN THE ATLAS SECURED COMPLEX. THERE IS SOME UNEASY CLEARING OF THROATS AND A FEW "UMS" AND SHUFFELING.

JOYCLYN

[TRYING TO MAINTAIN CALM]

I assure you doctors. I'm MORE than happy to stay here all day and into the night until I'm sure that neither of you had anything to do with a week's worth of tracking telemetry, disappearing.

JOVAK

[UPSET]

Butttttttt; what about the Christmas party tonight? I'm pretty sure, Santa is bringing me the present I was asking for. [UNDER BREATH] Lionel Choo-choo with working smokestack. . everything.

JOYCLYN

I.Don't.Give. . .two tosses about a party, about holiday cheer, and if I don't get that data back by tonight, that train is going up SOMEBODY'S BUM!

JEMMA

You can't honestly think, one of us would breach the non-disclosure agreement and sneak out. . .

JOYCLYN

There are two possibilities: Doctor. Somebody snuck in or hacked their way in and removed it; or somebody from inside snuck it out!

JEMMA

Two possibilities you've considered. Given the work done in here and in. . .well, I guess reality is subjective to the observer, but there are *countless* possible. . .

JOYCLYN

[ANGRY]

ENOUGH! [DEEP BREATHS, TRYING TO CONTROL HER ANGER]

JOVAK

[MUTTERING]

Yelling. . .not going to get you results I think you want. Plus, where's Doctor Waynewright? Why isn't he subject to this?

JOYCLYN

Oh, trust me Jovac. Lawrence isn't above my suspicion. None of you are. He's on his way down here now after they fixed the door to operations.

JEMMA

I keep telling them they need to shim it with the low moisture outside and warm air inside.

JOYCLYN
Let's. . . .[DEEP CALMING BREATH] start at the
beginning. Doctor Jovac.

JOVAK
Present!

JOYCLYN
You were in main control last night.

JOVAK
Yes, yes indeedee! Seven P.M. until three. .
.THREE in the morning. Missed the pancake dinner
and not happy about it.

JOYCLYN
You took over from Waynewright.

JOVAK
Correct.

JOYCLYN
Lorenz wasn't around.

JOVAK
Well, not in the lab, anyway!

JOYCLYN
What did the night entail?

JOVAK
Well, the variable window [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I
watched it for the full seventy-two minutes it
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Data
being transmitted was strong and steady. I was
able to map and make fairly solid [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] for next season!

JOYCLYN
And nobody else was in the lab?

THREE BEAT

JOVAK

Well, that's a funny question. With Gustav gone and Doctor Jennings. . .not being given the position; there are only three of us. Me. . .Jemma and Doctor Waynewright. Well and of course. . .YOU! You came in at 11PM to pick up paperwork, I remember!

JOYCLYN

No, not counting me.

JEMMA

Why not you?

JOYCLYN

You what?

JEMMA

How do we know it wasn't you, or actions you caused that led to the weeks' worth of telemetry disappearing?

JOYCLYN

[INDIGNANT]

Are you daft? I was sent down here to safeguard all this!!!

JOVAK

[SING-SONGY]

Doesn't mean you're without suspicion! While I was working [UNDER BREATH] on the railroad. . .All the live long day. . .maybe YOU. . .were in the kitchen with Dinah!

JEMMA

Early folk songs notwithstanding Agent Fowler. . .you have to admit that having been inside a secured government facility only four people on the station can access. . .highest statistical probabilities suggest at least a twenty-five percent possibility that you could be the culprit!

JOYCLYN

If I had done it, I wouldn't have said anything about it being missing. I wouldn't be sitting here with you lot! [SIGH] Back to last night.

SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING, CLOSING BEHIND.

LARRY

Alright, I'm here now. The doorframe. . .which was perfectly fine this morning has been repaired and I have been liberated. May I ask what the criticality is that necessitates my presence?

JOYCLYN

We've had a security breach in Atlas.

LARRY

[SHOCKED]

What? What happened?

JEMMA

Two weeks' worth of telemetry data can't be located.

LARRY

How did somebody get access to remove it?

JOYCLYN

That's . . .exactly, what I'm investigating. Had you been able to be here when summoned you'd know this!

JOVAC

She thinks one of us did it [under breath] choo-choo waiting.

LARRY

[INSULTED]

One of us, took the data? Are you mad?!?!

JOYCLYN

The security precautions and firewalls installed are N.S.A. hardened and routinely tested for faults. The physical security and restrictions are the same used in every top-secret government facilities, plus several not on the books. Nobody is going to simply cha-cha slide into this complex without alarms activating.

LARRY

So then obviously. . .it can't be your precautions at fault. . .so it's one of us? That is pure supposition and logical fallacy!

JEMMA

Or it was her!

LARRY

Equally absurd! Why would Agent. . .[FRUSTRATION GRUNT] People, I can't assert I fully understand what happened, or is current happening but it isn't productive.

JOYCLYN

Sit down Waynewright!

LARRY

Wouldn't it be *more* productive to have the experts, who review these operations week after week look into what happened. Unless your . . .paranoia suggests EVERYBODY was responsible, one of us will see if another is covering something up. More efficient then bright lights and rubber hoses; wouldn't you say?

JOYCLYN

Or it could be a suggestion from the very person who nicked the data from the start!

LARRY

You HAVE completely lost all sense! I did it? Me? I took something? The only thing: ONLY thing I care about at this station is this project and ensuring that we [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] .Long before you, or the buffoon of a deputy Marshal came onto this station it was me, ME that kept everything operating smoothly.

The fact that I'd be accused of giving somebody on the outside information they couldn't possibly comprehend. . .why? Why would I do that? I dislike most everybody on this station and the others I hardly even tolerate.

In the last year I've had to put up with dilettantes, Deputy dullards, distractions and

now the Delusional Intelligence Agency who can't defend digital data and definition of the distinct word "intelligence" is doubtful day after day.

JOVAC

[LEANS TOWARDS JOYCLYN]

They keep on stealing his "W" key, so he needs to relay on other letters, you see!

TWO BEAT

JOYCLYN

Well. Now that Waynewright is here; but don't we go all over the timelines. AGAIN!

[COMBINED MOANS FROM THE THREE ATLAS DOCTORS]

BEGIN FADE OUT

JOYCLYN

Waynewright! You began monitoring all operations at what time?

ACT IV

DIGITAL RECORDER ACTIVATE

BASS

Case file update. 23 December 2022 and current time is 19:22 hours. Supervisory Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Marlow. Amundsen Scott Sabotage & LC-130 Flight 0492 Crash Investigation. My formal request to unseal court documents pertaining to Chaz Wilford has been received and is being reviewed by the courts.

According to what Franklin tells me, these things aren't reviewed overnight, and I should prepare myself for at least four to six weeks before I hear anything. We all know how much I enjoy waiting!!

Must admit, leads are getting cold. Avenues I'm pursuing are coming up to dead ends. If there was

any present, I could really use for Christmas. .
.it would be a break in this case!

Suspect number two Sabine Greer is being looked into. Her background files weren't exactly spotless; but nothing stands out too problematic. A misdemeanor arrest for possession back in the 90s when she was a kid. Some drunk and disorderliness. Honestly, compared to other backgrounds on the DeWalts; she's a saint!

Want to ensure I have everything we can get on her and her past. Sometimes it's the littlest of things that can make or break an investigation. The trick is to not let them sneak by!

We're also getting a new Astrophysics doctor arriving on station tonight. Doctor Shepard Dellham. 55 with multiple doctorates and already has several seasons on the Ice at McMurdo. Thomas said he has all the earmarks of being the replacement for Doctor Van Zandt on Atlas.

Officially he'll be one of the research scientist helping with the South Pole Telescope lab. Seems the Atlas crew is back to fully manned once again. [CHUCKLE] Joyclyn seems to be on a tear! She's highly agitated about something that went missing. She won't say what it is; but that just tells me it's something from within the Atlas project.

I'm sure she strongly suspects myself or one of us was responsible. As much as I'd love to get my hands on anything inside of Atlas. .it's not us. If it was one of my found family who did it; they would have told me by now.

I know. . .I shouldn't take pleasure in the misery of somebody else as they struggle with their own investigation, especially this time of year. . .but um. . . [SLIGHT CHUCKLE]

Finally. I'm uh. . .I still have the thumb drive Fionna sent me; from. . .Marshal Goodwin. It was sent to Fionna months ago with the request that it be sent to me.

I've had it for several weeks now and. . .Fionna said there is a recorded message on it and I; I don't think I'm ready yet. Seeing Chuck, hearing him again. . .it's um. . . yeah. Just not ready. Leave it at that.

Okay. Christma. . .sorry; as our new Human Resources leader Miss Chipperfield keeps reminding everybody, tonight we're throwing a *winter festival* event. I've cleaned up. All my. . .festival presents I collected while in McMurdo have been wrapped and will be handed out by. . .hrmm; I wonder if Miss Chipperfield invited Santa to the gathering tonight? Anywho; I'll make sure presents get to their recipients.

Ribs finally feeling back to. . .well like the ribs of a 50-year-old man I guess; but less bruised than when I took the round to the chest, so that's something else to be thankful for.

Alright, let's put a bow on this recording as well! Case file update concluded. 23 December 2022 and time is 19:30 hours. Supervisory Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Marlow. Amundsen Scott Sabotage & LC-130 Flight 0492 Crash Investigation. End.

BASS

[SINGING AS HE HEADS OUT]

*Here comes Santa boot, here comes Santa boot,
right up your ass lane!*

DIGITAL RECORDER STOP

ACT V (Christmas Party)

FADE IN. THE PARTY THIS YEAR IS IN THE BIG GYM. THE ONLY LOCATION ABLE TO HOST SO MANY PEOPLE ALL AT ONCE. IT'S PACKED! ALMOST EVERYBODY ON STATION IS PRESENT THIS EVENING. THERE IS NON-DENOMINATIONAL MUSIC PLAYING, PEOPLE ARE EATING AND DRINKING FROM ITEMS BROUGHT IN BY LUNCH LADY ALICE AND EVERYBODY IS HAVING A GREAT TIME. ALMOST.

KENDRA

I think they're even more people here than last Christmas party. Everything looks incredible! Ms. June absolutely outdid herself this time!

BASS

I heard there was a bit of a spat between her and the H.R. person. Ms. June was livid at the recommendation of making everything so, non-specific. So, after a good deal of discussion and back and forth; we're doing the same thing we did last year. Celebrating all holidays taking place this time of year. Bohdi Day, Yule, Kwanzaa, Christmas, Hanukkah and of course Mister Kelley's favorite. . .Festivus!

KENDRA

It's so colorful and cheery. It doesn't feel like a gym in here at all! It feels so warm and welcoming!

BASS

Odd; I don't see Doctor Waynewright standing around and trying to make it known he doesn't want to be here.

KENDRA

Actually. . .I don't see any of the Atlas team around. Or Joyclyn for that matter. I wonder if we aren't getting the station manager's year end greeting this time.

BASS

Oh. . .Ms. Chipperfield. Ms. Chipperfield?

JULIA

Hello Deputy Marshal. Doctor! Enjoying yourselves? Hopefully not too much despite the . . . festive egg nog somebody INSISTED to have put out?

BASS

Oh yes ma'am. Wonderful time. I was curious; have you seen Doctor Waynewright this evening? He's something of a fixture at these events.

JULIA

No. I haven't seen him since we were stuck in the admin hallway this morning. Just glad Chief Bustamante is replacing the whole frame this time. Don't want to file a report to The Office of Polar Projects! O.P.P. doesn't want a fire code violation!

MIKHAIL

[FROM A DISTANCE]

Yeah you know me!

KENDRA

How about Doctor's Jovac or Lorenz?

JULIA

[CONSIDERING]

Hrmmm. No, I haven't seen them either.

BASS

Odd. Well, none the less the least we can do is take advantage of all the hard work that went into thing and enjoy the Christmas. . .

JULIA

[POLITELY CORRECTING]

Holiday Winter Festival. Mustant focus on just one at the expense of others!

BASS

Of course. How. . . old man of me!

KENDRA

[UNDER HER BREATH]

Sweetie!

BASS

Oh yes! I'm sorry. How are you enjoying being back at the station Ms. Chipperfield? The broken leg all healed up?

JULIA

It's a challenge getting reacclimated. So many things I need to make sure are getting done! So many compliance and training seminars to schedule. Refresher courses on staff behavior, anti-discrimination, and general civility. Chief Meteorologist Topper Hunt is always a handful. .

.

TOPPER

[WALKING BY]

Some say two, handfuls. And it's now Storm Chaser. . .Al Timiter!

JULIA

I brought more forms than ever Doctor Hunt! Not afraid to fill them out!!! No, but my biggest challenge, are THOSE TWO!

TWO BEAT

BASS

Dan and Dave Biggs? [CONFUSED] but they've been so sedat. . .

KENDRA

Wait. You're the reason they haven't burst into a fight this season, at all?

JULIA

You better believe it! The amount of time I have had to haul those two into my office; might as well call it the penalty box.

BASS

[REALIZATION]

That's why they looked so freaked out whenever I had them in there last season! Before I moved offices!

JULIA

As hard as it is for me to believe, since I returned, they haven't had so much as a cross word between the two of them. They're up to something, I know it!

BASS

Well, good luck with everything. If you'll excuse me?

FOOTSTEPS AWAY

BASS

Wow is she wound tight!

KENDRA

I've only met her a few times before; but I do remember her being this. . .hyper-vigilant against ANYTHING that could be even mildly offensive!

BASS

Doesn't leave a lot of time for enjoyment when you're constantly looking for issues?

KENDRA

I don't get the impression that's she a very happy person. Despite the perky vainer she has.

THOMAS

HEY GUYS!

BOTH KENDRA AND BASS JUMP A BIT, STARTLED

BASS

Mister Kelley. . .I will NEVER understand how you're able to get around undetected.

THOMAS

I am SO sorry Deputy Marshal. . .uh, Doctor! Not trying to be sneaky or anything.

KENDRA

It's alright Thomas. We know you're not doing it intentionally! How is everything?

THOMAS

Oh wonderful, just so wonderful! I just love this time of year!

KENDRA

Did you get to talk to your mother and sister?

THOMAS

I did, I did! Mom is doing well in the retirement community and Aggie. . .well she's . . .being calm these days.

BASS

I'm sure she's going to be just fine. Didn't know your mom was enjoying her retirement! Good for her!

THOMAS

You don't recall? About six months ago when I had your. . .eh, never mind. No Problem, Deputy Marshal, oh and thanks for asking about her you two! Mhm, almost forgot. Did you get to meet our newest arrival to the science team yet?

BASS

Assume you mean Doctor Dellham. No, not yet. I assume he'll be working on. . .

THOMAS

Specific projects here on station. Almost a hundred percent positive it's him, yes. He only just arrived about an hour ago. He's getting settled and said he'd attend the Christ. . .the holiday party later.

KENDRA

Look forward to meeting him. Oh. . .over there! Doctor Waynewright and the others are just walking in now.

THOMAS

I was wondering where he was. Typically, he hides out in his office until I remind him he is supposed to give the annual Chri. . .Holiday festival thank you speech. Guess there was something, brewing. . .in special projects!

BASS

No doubt. [BEAT] Oh good, Joyclyn made it as well. Now, it's a party!

KENDRA

We talked about this Bass. The more worked up you get around her. . .

BASS

The more she gets to live rent free in my brain. You're not wrong, it's just. . .you don't undo fifteen years of habit . . .and Cincinnati in just a few months!

THOMAS

You're always bringing up Cincinnati. What exactly happened there?

BASS

Another time. . .mister Kelley. Looks like Doctor Waynewright is taking the stage.

THOMAS

[SUDDENLY REMEMBERS]

Oh shoot, I need to go make sure the guest of honor is ready to come out! Excuse me, won't you?

KENDRA

No problem, Thomas! Go. Go!

BASS

Wow, none of the Atlas people look happy. Well, except for Jovac, why is he making train noises?

KENDRA

It's Karl. He's. . .eccentric that way.

FRED AND KATHERINE WALKING BY

DOCTOR TIMMS

The newest Danielle Steel book! Oh, thank you Fredrick!

FRED

I remember how much you said you liked reading
the old broads works. Lord knows you talk enough
about her!

DOCTOR TIMMS

Oh we'll deal with that comment when we're back
home later on. . . .

TAPPING ON THE MICROPHONE

LARRY

Good evening, everybody. Good. . .can you PLEASE
turn off the music Mx. Webster?

MUSIC CUTS OUT

LARRY

Lovely. [BREATH] I apologize for my tardiness
this . . .festive evening. I was, very avoidably
delayed with, not very pressing work. However,
that is now over with [UNDER BREATH] thankfully.

Ah yes. . .this thing. . . .again. [CLEAR
THROAT]. My-my! How lovely it is to see all your
cheery faces this evening as we come together to
celebrate. . . .

[TO HIMSELF] everything was crossed out? Um. .
.to honor this multi-cultural, dignified
celebration of cross-beliefs and ensuring. .
[FRUSTRATED] Ms. June; were you drinking when you
edited this. I can't read this next part. .

JULIA

[LOUDLY FROM BACK OF THE ROOM]

Ensuring traditions are held without
inconveniencing others who don't agree with the
patriarchy on. . .why are you all looking at me?

CHERYL-LYNN

[FROM DISTANCE]

Don't be throwing no shade my way Doctor Grumpy-
Pants! I know better!

CROWD GROANS

LARRY

Guess I'll just improvise this year, won't I?
Okay then.

Ah! I have it.

"Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shriveled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dogdays; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas."

I do so love the Dickensian stance on holidays!
As well as cookbook suggestions!

So, let me wish all of you. . .and in no particular order, Ms. Chipperfield. . .A splendid Kwanza, Happy Hanukkah, Joyous Yule, A merry Christmas, Blessed Bohdi and a Kick.Ass.Festivus?

THOMAS

FEATS OF STRENGTH!

LARRY

Okay then. Hrm? I need to. . .oh. . .yes. It is my {clear throat} great pleasure to introduce. . .St. Nicholas; the non-denominational gift-giver.

APPLAUSE AS A DOOR FLYS OPEN

SANTA-ZEKE

But you all can call me Santa! Ho-Ho-HO ya'll. I do love me this time of season! Ho-Ho-Ho. [LAUGH A SANTA LAUGH] Hey KEENAN! Maybe old saint Nick gift wrapped you some common sense this year huh?

MARRY CHRISTMAS. . .AND ALL THEM OTHER THINGS
TOO! HO-HO HO!

Let's see what I have here. Where is little Karl?
Doctor Jovac?

JOVAC
Did you get my letter?

SANTA-ZEKE
HO-HO-HO! Here you go Karl, I got it!

JOVAC
Oh. . .hot diggity dog! My Lionel. OH, HAPPY DAY
EVERYBODY!

BASS
I don't think he gets this happy and excited
about ANYTHING as he does playing Santa each
year.

SANTA-ZEKE
[FROM A DISTANCE]
Where's Patrick? Special delivery all the way
from your Cousin Jimmy's Store in Wisconsin!

BEELINE SPRINT TO THE STAGE

PATRICK
Aw man Cousin Jimmy ALWAYS comes through! Marry
Kush-mas! Thanks Santa.

SANTA-ZEKE
Yeah, Santa gonna pretend he didn't hear none of
that.

KENDRA
Bass. We um. . .well we all got together and we.
. .we're in the process of getting something for
you but will need another week or so.

BASS
Oh, I really wish you guys wouldn't go to all
that trouble for me!!

KENDRA

Hush you! I don't think you really understand just how much you mean, not just to me. . .but to all of us! You've not only made a difference here, and in yourself. . .but to all of us!

BASS

Okay, okay. . .that's enough. I get it.

KENDRA

Really Bass. I mean it. We all mean it!

BASS

[UNCOMFORTABLE]

I understand Kendra. I guess this is a good enough time to give you your present. Picked it up in McMurdo while I was there.

KENDRA

And you're sure you're alright after. . .being shot? I mean you were only off work for one-week for recovery!

BASS

The vest took the brunt of it. A few bruised ribs. It's not the first time I've been shot in my career.

UNWRAPPING GIFT

KENDRA

Not sure if that is supposed to comfort me or make my anxiety worse! [TWO BEAT] Bass! This is beautiful. Is it.

CLICK OF A LOCKET OPENING

BASS

It's a locket, yes. I know you have a skin allergy to gold, so I picked one in silver. Inside is a picture of me, and then a photo of us from last New Year's I had shrunk.

KENDRA

This is so sweet. Help me put it on?

BASS

Absolutely!

KENDRA

Thank you so much sweetie. Merry Christmas

BASS

Merry Christmas.

HEAVY FOOTSTEPS APPROACH.

SANTA-ZEKE

Ho-Ho-Ho ya'll. I'm guessing that. . .Doc Jennings told you the team gift is a bit delayed.

KENDRA

Ooh! I want to go show Ms. June my locket! Be right back.

HEALS LEAVING

BASS

Yes, she did and it's alright. I just wish you all wouldn't go to such efforts.

SANTA-ZEKE

That's why they call it, the season of giving lawman. Plus, I think. . .I know once you see it you're going to love it.

BASS

I'm sure I will. Did you open my gift yet?

SANTA-ZEKE

Hrmm, oh no not yet. Um, Santa has been busy, handing out gifts, making the rounds. Keeping on schedule. . .

Look, need to get back on my rounds but. . .just wanted to say, Santa may not have a gift in this here bag for you Bass, but if'n I'm honest. You have probably the best present waiting to be opened in your office.

BASS

Huh?

SANTA-ZEKE

The thumb drive from your old Boss. From Chuck. Just sitting there cause I'm sure you being all stubborn and still holding onto some feelings about what happened. Just. . .Damn Lawman, you know what people would give to get one more message from they folks that passed on? Last thing. . .very last thing you want to do is to let that thing go unheard for too long.

Consider it. . .A special Christmas delivery.

[TWO BEAT]

SANTA-ZEKE

Okay, and with that. . .[GRUNT PICKING UP GIFT BAG] Santa got a few more presents and stops to make. Um. Hey, TOMMY?

THOMAS

Hi Santa! Oh, I see you found the deputy Marshal after all!

SANTA-ZEKE

Yeah! Hey. . .Santa needs to be done in the LO Arch in a few minutes. Gift some joy to the two cats that had to man the monitors for the fuel Arches. Have the last president to Waynewright to give. You do me a solid and deliver it?

THOMAS

No problem Santa. Guess that makes me. . .one of Santa's elves! [CHUCKLE]

SANTA-ZEKE

[HURRIED]

Yeah, I guess it do. Okay. Thanks Tommy. See you in a few Lawman!

[FOUR BEAT]

BASS

Mister Todd! Good to see you this evening!

IT CHRIS

Hi, Deputy Marshal. How's the party going.

BASS

It's, as festive as it is normally. You just missed Doctor Waynewright's address.

IT CHRIS

No, no I heard it. Was just. . .toward the back of the room.

BASS

Ah! I understand, believe me. . .I get it. It does get better.

IT CHRIS

I know I know, and I didn't mean to bring the mood down.

BASS

You didn't! I promise you Mister Todd. I'm happy to have you hear talking with me. Happy that you came out tonight.

CHRIS

By the way, thank you for your present! The second season boxed set of the Mandalorian! I look forward to watching it.

BASS

I figured you wouldn't have had it yet and am happy to be able to get it for you.

LARRY

Oh, the um. Final gift of the year. Is to me of course. After the last. . year's present. . .

UNWRAPPING

LARRY

[UNAMUSED]

A bag of keyboard keys. All the letter "W".

LAUGHS FROM THE CROWD.

HEALS RETURN TO THE TWO GENTS TALKING.

KENDRA

Honey! Seriously? Do you always have to antagonize him?

BASS

I honestly have no idea WHAT you mean.

KENDRA

Uh -huh. Are you lying?

BASS

Oh absolutely, one hundred percent!

KENDRA

Hi Chris! It's great to see you tonight.

IT CHRIS

You too, Doctor. You too!

LARRY

Amusing gift DEPUTY marshal. I trust this was from you?

BASS

I can't say it is Doctor. I'm not one for practical jokes and joking now.

LARRY

Please don't mistake my question for interest DEPUTY Marshal, I don't truly care! No, I'm here to deliver a present of my own. This. . .parcel was left accidentally on my desk. Must have been accidentally placed there. It's for you Mister Todd.

BASS

For me?

LARRY

Well unless there is another. . .individual on this station named Christopher Todd. [SIGH] Some people.

IT CHRIS

Huh. Well. . .thank you Doctor.

LARRY

Do not thank me! I have nothing to do with that item. Simply the messenger I assure you!

UNWRAPPING

IT CHRIS

It's one of the stations' iPad minis. It's. .
.huh, looks like it has some sort of. . .data on
it.

KENDRA

That's. . .that looks like telemetry data. It's
been collected over, what looks like ten days.
It's unusual because it's. . .those are sub
harmonic pulses picked up on. . .whatever sensors
were used in this experiment.

The Pulses are. . .groups of two, then Three.
Five. Sev. . .prime numbers! Each group being
picked up on an increasingly narrow band. There's
a large data burst after each time the group of
seven is recorded.

LARRY

Well, to me it appears . . .somebody matched the
the frequency of the sub harmonic's seventh
pairing, synchronized an 8.06 gigahertz microwave
signal from a voltage-controlled oscillator with
an optical pulse train from a 77.5-Megahertz
mode-locked E.R.-fiber laser using a fiber-based
optical-microwave phase detector, inverted the
narrow band frequency and after narrowing the
bandwidth pass. . .they recorded something.
There!

IT CHRIS

This is for me? Should I press it?

BASS

I'm curious!

KENDRA

Me too!

THOMAS

Yeah, what's it say?

LARRY

I could care less myself!

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A MULTIMEDIA TAP. THERE IS STATIC, AND WITH THE STATIC DYING DOWN, A FAMILIAR VOICE IS HEARD.

IT EMERY

Attempt twenty-six. 77.5-megahertz mode locked.
Space ghost is WAY better than Johnny Quest! And transmit!

IT CHRIS

[EMOTIONAL]

That. . .that was Em! That was Emery! According to this, it was recorded a week ago. He's Alive! My brave little hobbit is still alive! This. . .this is the best Christmas gift ever! Thank you so much Doctor Wayn. . .

LARRY

Do not THANK me! I'm simply the postal carrier here. I have no idea where that telemetry data come from and WON'T vouch for its authenticity!

Now, I WONT wish you a happy holidays Christopher. I WON'T thank you for the sacrifice Mister Waters made saving our lives. I WON'T stay here for, fellowship or merriment. I'll simply leave you with. . .you may all go now!

OUTRO AND CREDITS

DIGITAL RECORDER BEEP

TYPING OF KEYS. SLOWLY. THERE IS A DEEP BREATH, ALMOST AS IF BRACING ONESELF FOR WHAT IS TO COME. WE HEAR A SINGLE KB KEY BEING PUSHED.

CHUCK

. . .can't just make these dagum things easier to operate! Okay. . think we got 'er workin'.
[CLEARS THROAT]

Bass. Don't want to get all dramatic and Hollywood on you, but. . .if your listening to me right now, then that means somebody REALLY shit

the bed! Need to set this thing as my ace up the sleeve. Insurance policy I guess you'd say.

When I was in Washington D.C. last week, it was only supposed to be for routine budget reviews and internal Justice Department paperwork. All the fun stuff we Marshals get to do.

Around the second day I was there, I was approached by an individual who said they had information about the pole. About the projects at your research station. About. . . well they just kept saying "The Ice."

Turns out, and after a lot of disbelieving and doubt; they were on the level son. What they had and what I found out. . . whew! We thought this was just going to be a by-the-book homicide investigation. We were WRONG boy! Real, REAL wrong!

The person I was meeting with didn't have the whole story themselves; but they are damn sure had enough! I've scanned and attached everything they had onto this thumbdrive-doohikey. Probably want to be sitting down before you start cracking them open. Hrmm. Also be a good idea to not be around nobody either when you do.

I think after you see what they have, you'll get your own estimate on what we're facing; what we're up against and why it's important we stay in the game boy!

This is real big Bass. News headline and history book big! Yeah, I know I'm getting all dramatic again. That said, I can't think of another person I'd rather have down there to work this for us. Nobody I'd trust more.

TWO BEAT

Okay. Now I got to get all sappy and crybaby. Bass, chances are that I'm gone now. Don't have many words of wisdom. Not saying I'm some . . . saint or figure people should look up to. Hell,

I'm just a guy who was around for a spell, did a thing or two and tried to help folks.

Why I'm. . .I feel like. . .man I hate this. .
.aw hell's bells! I love you son! You aren't
just an employee. Not just one of my Deputy
Marshals. You're my boy. Not saying I was happy,
when Dianne started bringing you around. [Under
breath] Donkey-brained hotshot kid.

But I have to say, after all this time. I was
wrong back then. [SERIOUS SHIFT] No! not about
you cause you STILL HAVE THEM DONKEY-BRAINS!

I'm talking about Diane's decision. To get
married. It was a good one after all. I was
wrong!

BASS

[A LITTLE SAD]

Whoa!

CHUCK

Yeah, I said it, don't go making some big deal.
Anyway, listen here boy. You got some darkness in
you Bass. Have demons you need to get your hands
around. I know you don't like to think. . .about
your wife. My Daughter. About Diane, but nobody
faults you for all that son. Nobody except
yourself; so, it's only yourself that needs to
come to peace with it.

OFF IN THE DISTANCE ON RECORDING

JANET

Charlie! Will you come on already, we're going to
be late to the theater.

CHUCK

Alright. That's the boss. Need to go get my
fancy-suit on so I can go pretend like I enjoy
I*talians dressing like clowns and singing like a
dog howling at a fire-engine on stage!

Look over the files I've attached. Bass. . no
seriously. . .Bass, listen to me. Hear what I
have to say. Get the job done. Then get out.

Retire. You find that pretty little doctor and go
make babies. Live. Be happy!

Okay. Gonna go throw up from all that emotion
and then get gussied up for Janet. Chuck
Goodwin. U.S. Marshal. February 4, 2022.

RECORDING STOPS

A FEW BREATHS FROM BASS. WE HEAR KEYBOARD KEYS CLICKING

BASS
February 4th. The day he and Janet were murdered.
What did you have old man that was so. . .

KEYBOARD KEYS. DRAMATIC MUSIC

BASS
This is. . . is. . . Holy.SHIT!

BMB TAG