Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

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No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

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by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

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His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

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No special costume, but he wears a coat.

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She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

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Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

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by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

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ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

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No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

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by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

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His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

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No special costume, but he wears a coat.

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She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

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Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

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by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

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ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

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No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

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by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End

Synopsis: A reporter doing a live interview on location during Christmas tries to get passing shoppers to share their holiday cheer. He encounters a series of comically hostile or just plain nutty characters before a passing Christian helps him recover from his ordeal and shares the true source of holiday joy. Length of performance: approximately 10-12 minutes.

CHARACTERS:

Wally W. Wigwhacker, the TV anchor.
His costume consists of a long coat over a suit and tie. He carries a wireless microphone.

The Train Man
No special costume, but he wears a coat.

Aunt Mildred
She wears a shawl, with gray hair and glasses. The hair can be spray-on color or a wig. She carries a shopping bag, containing a large plastic bone prop.

Santa

Influencer 1 and 2

The Stressed Man
Coat and hat. Holds a styrophone coffee cup. The large goofy "magnifying glass" type of gag eyeglasses would work well with this character.

Jittery Man
Sloppily-dressed, with a Santa hat (

The Carolers
A group of five or six (at least; but a larger group is even better) Christmas Carolers who are more concerned with being seen and heard than really witnessing.

Lady Passerby: She can't hear Wally properly because of the carolers and slugs him after a misunderstanding. Wears a big wig on top of her head.

The Indignant Man
Hat and coat, with umbrella he walks with as a cane.

The Helpful Person
Casual clothes with a coat.

Announcers #1 and **#2**
Off stage on microphone. These may be pre-recorded and mixed with the opening music.

Season's Beatings-Live From Downtown"

by Fred Passmore and Jon Lawhon

(*Song fades under as our reporter walks onto the scene. He is carrying a microphone. He stands and waits, looking at the "camera" which is the audience, as the intro to his live broadcast is heard.*)

ANNOUNCER #1: (Cut #6 on the CD, continued) WWWW TV News is brought to you by the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company. They're fairly certain they'll work well in wet weather. Now, here's Will Watson.

ANNOUNCER #2: (Cut #6 continued) "It's just two more days till Christmas and the streets are packed as the shoppers rush home with their treasures. Reporter Wally W. Wigwhacker is wight in the middle of the wush... I always do that! Right in the middle of the rush and we go there live to sample the holiday spirit on the street."

WALLY: (*smiling*) "Thanks, Will. People are indeed passing with huge packages as they scramble to find that last present. The Christmas mood is bright, however, as we meet smile after smile. (*He stops a passing pedestrian.*) Excuse me sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker of WWWW News. Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with us?

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "I said, would you mind sharing..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: (*Irritated now*) "Would you mind..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

Wally: "Sir..."

The Train Man: "Huh?"

(*Wally just looks at him.*)

The Train Man: "Huh? Huh? Huh? (*Faster and faster, as he begins to shuffle his feet and move around.*) Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh! (*Like a train*) Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh... (*He grins at the audience and mimes pulling a train whistle as he chugs around in a circle*) WooooWoooo! (*He happily chugs off the stage*.)

(*Wally grimaces slightly, then changes it back into a smile as he looks back at the camera, or the audience.*)

Wally: "Will, it seems we just had an encounter with one of our city's more colorful characters. But, what's Christmas without a fruitcake? (*Another person has come onstage. It is Aunt Mildred*.) Here comes a promising person.

Aunt Mildred:*(She stops cold. Stares at him. Her eyes go wide.)* "…Bobby?"

Wally: "No, ma'am, it's Wally Wigwhacker, WWWW -"

Aunt Mildred: "BOBBY! *(Grabs his face with both hands and squishes it.)* Oh, Bobby, look at you! Look how thin you are! Are you eating? You're not eating. *(Turns to the camera, confidentially.)* He's not eating."

Wally:*(muffled, face still squished)* "Ma'am, I'm live on television -"

Aunt Mildred: "You've got something on your face. *(Pulls out a tissue, licks it, and scrubs his cheek while he squirms.)* Hold still. Hold STILL, Bobby."

Wally: "Ma'am -"

Aunt Mildred:*(straightening his tie, then flattening his hair down with her palm)* "There. Now you look like somebody. *(Digs in her bag, pulls out the stocking cap, and yanks it down over his head and eyes.)* And it's freezing out here! Where is your hat?"

Wally:*(pulling the cap up off his eyes)* "Ma'am, if I could just ask you one question about Christmas -"

Aunt Mildred: "Are you hungry? You're hungry. *(Produces the hard candy, stuck to its wrapper and plainly ancient, and holds it out.)* Here. I've had this in my purse since Easter."

Wally:*(eyeing it)* "…I'm fine."

Aunt Mildred:*(pressing it into his hand anyway)* "Put it in your pocket."

Wally:*(giving up, pocketing it)* "Ma'am, our viewers would love to hear what Christmas means to you."

Aunt Mildred:*(Suddenly stern. The temperature drops.)* "Christmas. I'll tell you about Christmas. I have twenty-three grandchildren. Twenty-three! And do you know how many of them called me this year? *(Leans in.)* Guess."

Wally:*(carefully)* "…None?"

Aunt Mildred: "NONE! *(She grabs his face again and plants an enormous lipstick kiss on his forehead.)* You call your mother, Bobby. You never call your mother. Do you know what that does to a woman?"

Wally: "Ma'am, I really don't think I'm -"

Aunt Mildred:*(winding up with the shopping bag)* "DON'T YOU SASS ME!"

(WHACK. She clobbers him with the shopping bag, turns, and stalks off, calling back over her shoulder.)

Aunt Mildred: "…AND EAT SOMETHING!" *(Wally staggers upright with a bright red lipstick print on his forehead and the stocking cap crooked on his head, recovering for the camera)*

ANNOUNCER #1 "Ohhh *(Both announcers grimace)* Well, Wally, they say family is what this season is all about. And it appears your expected at dinner." (*amused by Wally's miss fortune)*

Keep the lipstick print and the stocking cap on him for the rest of the skit. By the time the Indignant Man is through with him, Wally should look like a disaster

ANNOUNCER #2 "It seems that finding the Christmas spirit may be a little harder than we thought. But, we won't let Wally give up! Wet's see if he can't snag someone overflowing with the merry mood of Christmas. (*The Stressed Man is walking quickly onto the stage and goes to pass Wally, obviously irritated at this guy in his way.*)

Wally: Sir? Would you tell us what makes Christmas such a joy-filled time for you?"

Stressed Man: (*Further irritated by the interruption.*) "Joy? Where? I don't have time for joy, you idiot! (*His ranting escalates.*) What does Christmas have to do with joy? Don't you get it? I've got brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins and in-laws and outlaws at my house right now! They all need gifts! They all need food! They all need a bath! The plumbing at the house broke! And I'm trying to get all the stuff I need! But I can't find any of the stuff! The stores are out of stuff! And my therapist is out of his office! And the shoppers are out of control! (*screaming*) And I'm just about out of my mind!!! (*suddenly goes completely calm*) I gotta remember the Cheese Whiz..." (*walks off preoccupied.*)

Wally: (*rapidly losing his cheer*) "Christmas joy. It seems to be a rare commodity here in the big city. *(The Mall Santa is slumped on a crate, beard pulled down under his chin, holding a cup of coffee. Wally spots him and brightens for the first time all night.)* "But wait — if anyone in this town has the Christmas spirit, it has to be the big man himself! Sir! Wally W. Wigwhacker, WWWW News. Would you share a little of that Christmas joy with our viewers?"

Mall Santa:*(flat, not looking up)* "I'm on break."

Wally: "Just a word or two about the children -"

Mall Santa: "Forty-three."

Wally: "I'm sorry?"

Mall Santa:*(holding up a finger)* "Forty-three kids on this knee today. One of 'em was damp."

Wally:*(deflating)* "…Ah."

Mall Santa: "One kid asked me for a pony. Next kid asked me for a kidney for his grandma. Now what am I supposed to do with that, Chuck? I'm not Santa! I work at the MALL!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Mall Santa: "And the list. Everybody's got a list. *(Standing up now, working himself up.)* Nobody ever asks Santa what SANTA wants. You know what Santa wants? Santa wants arch supports. Santa wants a chair that is not shaped like a throne, because thrones are not ergonomic, Chuck!"

Wally: "…Wally."

Mall Santa:*(right in his face, ominous)* "And I'll tell you something else. I know what YOU want for Christmas. *(Long pause.)* Everybody wants something."

Wally:*(small)* "I just wanted a quote."

Mall Santa: "Well, get in line."

(He reaches into his pocket and produces a single candy cane. He holds it out. Wally reaches for it. He pulls it back and eats it himself.)

Mall Santa: "Ho, ho… no."

(He trudges off, pulling his beard back up over his face as he goes.)

Announcer #1: "Well, you heard it here first folks. He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. And apparently he gets fifteen minutes and a vending machine."

(The sound of singing is heard offstage under the announcers delivery. It grows louder as a group of carolers enters the stage area and proceeds to walk behind Wally, singing "joy to the world" to the tune of in the jungle from the lion king They get progressively louder as Wally speaks.)

Announcer #1: "Wally is that some Christmas music we hear?"

Wally: *(Continuing, he is cheered some.)* "Well yes, it seems that we have here a true symbol of the season, some Christmas carolers! Indeed, a heart-warming tradition that is seldom seem anymore, Let's listen for a moment..."

(The carolers stop and sing right behind Wally. Lead singer busts out with main line)

Wally: "Huh, Ive never heard the Joy to the world like that before. Was that the from the lion king?"

Lead Caroler: We are the Christmas Parody Carolers.

Wally: "Huh Parody Carolers?

Lead Caroler: That's right. Here pick a theme *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: "Gilligan's Island"?

Lead Caroler: oh a classic. *(Choir sings Joy to the world to the theme from Gilligan's Isalnd.)*

Wally: That was interesting. Can you tell me what gives you Joy this Christmas

Lead Caroler: Pick one more. *(holds out Santa hat with papers inside. Wally picks a paper and reads it)*

Wally: Jurassic Park…oh no

(*Choir sings Joy to the World with Jurassic Park theme. Someone runs around in dinosaur costume)*

Lead Caroler: Wait are we on Camera? Hit it guys. (*Choir sings Joy to the World loudly*

Wally: *(Startled, and trying to speak over their singing.)* "Oh! Uh... as I was saying, the sounds of the season are a great backdrop as we try to find the joy of Christmas..."

(The carolers are not moving on, but rather hogging the scene and singing louder, mugging for the camera, and each one jostling for a position where they can be seen.)

Wally: *(Very distracted and yelling.)* "...to find the joy of Christmas as we speak to passersby...! Excuse me, Miss! Miss! Would you mind sharing with our listeners..."

Lady: *(Stopping.)* "What? I can't hear you?"

Wally: *(Shouting.)* "Would you share some of your holiday joy?!"

Lady: *(Shaking her head and cupping an ear.)* "What did you say, help you find your little boy?"

Wally: "No, I want you to share your holiday cheer!"

Lady: "You said my hair looks like a horse's rear? Well, I never!" *(She slugs him with her shopping bag and stalks off.)*

*(The carolers are getting louder and more boisterous as they jockey for the best position amongst themselves to be on TV. Wally moves away to get them out of the shot, but they all **rapidly crab-walk sideways as a group** to stay behind him as he telecasts!)*

Wally: *(Looking back around and seeing this as he goes to speak, he stops as he does a double-take.)* "What in the...?"

*(The carolers all **begin to move as a tight group** toward Wally and threaten to swamp him as they sing and stare at the camera with huge grins!)*

Wally: "Uh, oh...!"

*(Wally turns back toward the camera with a terrified expression as they **gather around him and envelop him** with their group and sing!)*

Carolers: *(Singing Hallelujah Chorus.)* "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hal-le-lu-jah!!!"

(Wally's microphone is held high in the middle of the group, then sinks down out of sight. A moment later he is seen to crawl out of the group on his hands and knees and scurry away from them. He stands just as they finish the single verse of the "Hallelujah Chorus" with a sustained and triumphant "Haaaaaalleeeeeeluuuuujaaaaaah!")

Wally: *(Standing and recovering, he turns to the camera and gasps the lines.)* "And now... we will ask the caroling group... to contribute of their money... to help the poor this Christmas!"

*(At this, the group, looking alarmed, hurriedly begins to **scurry as a tight group** off-stage, singing the first verse of "Jingle Bells.")*

Carolers: *(As they leave.)* "Dashing through the snow, on a one-horse open sleigh..."

Wally: *(Running a hand through his hair, he speaks to himself.)* "Wow. I was afraid they'd start singing "The Twelve Days of Christmas" next. *(Turning back to the camera.)* We'll keep looking. Surely someone is feeling happy today!

(The two girls enter together, filming themselves. Brylee stops dead and grabs Jaydyn's arm.)

Jaydyn: "What. What."

Brylee: *(barely a whisper)* "Jaydyn. Jaydyn, look."

Jaydyn: *(turning, seeing Wally, hand flying to her mouth)* "...Oh my gosh."

Brylee: "Is that—"

Jaydyn: "That's him."

Brylee: "That's **HIM**."

Both: *(full scream)* "AAAAAAHHH!"

(They mob him. Wally, who has not had a good night, straightens up and blossoms.)

Wally: "Well! Hello, ladies! It's always a pleasure to meet a viewer—"

Jaydyn: "I cannot believe this is happening. I **literally** cannot believe this is happening."

Brylee: "Okay. Selfie. Selfie selfie selfie—"

Jaydyn: *(looking him over, suddenly all business)* "Wait. No. Not like that."

Brylee: "Not like that."

Wally: "...Not like what?"

Jaydyn: "Sir, no offense, but your coat is giving substitute teacher."

Brylee: "It's fine. We can fix it. Hold still."

(Brylee rolls one sleeve up above his elbow, fast and expert, while he protests.)

Wally: "Ma'am — ma'am, this coat is network property—"

Brylee: "Shhh. Shh. Trust the process. *(Steps back and assesses him.)* ...It's not balanced."

Jaydyn: "It's not balanced."

Brylee: "Do you have the scissors?"

Wally: "The **WHAT**?"

(Jaydyn produces a pair of scissors from her bag without a flicker of hesitation, as though this is a perfectly normal thing to be carrying.)

Wally: "No. No no no — ma'am — **MA'AM**—"

(SNIP. The sleeve comes away at the shoulder in one clean motion. Jaydyn holds it up, examines it, and tucks it into her own coat pocket. Wally stares at his bare arm.)

Jaydyn: *(satisfied)* "Now it's fashion."

Brylee: *(adjusting his stocking cap to a jaunty angle)* "And honestly the hat's working for him."

Jaydyn: *(licking her thumb and going at the lipstick print on his forehead)* "This, though—"

Wally: *(flinching away)* "Why does **everyone** keep doing that?!"

Brylee: "Okay — picture. Go go go go."

(All three pose. Three or four rapid takes, each a completely different pose, the girls shoving him into position each time. Wally gamely gives a thumbs-up on every one.)

Jaydyn: "One more. One more. Okay — **posting**."

(A pause. The two of them stare at the phone. Their faces fall at precisely the same rate.)

Brylee: "...Wait."

Jaydyn: *(reading)* "Wally W. Wigwhacker. WWWW News."

Brylee: "Keep going."

Jaydyn: "...Local."

Brylee: "Local?"

Jaydyn: "Your just a local news broadcaster?"

Wally: WWWW news

Jaydyn: Ew

(They start off. Jaydyn stops, comes back, politely hands him the severed sleeve, pats his hand, and leaves.)

Wally: *(alone, one arm bare, holding his own sleeve, to the camera)* "...We'll be right back."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We interrupt our live coverage with breaking news. WWWW News has learned that a local mall Santa has filed a formal grievance with management over — *(reading, baffled)* — the ergonomics of his throne."

ANNOUNCER #1: "In related news, the Wishy Washy Windshield Wiper Company has announced its new All-Season Wiper. Works in rain, sleet, snow, **or** hail. Not all four. Honestly, not really any of them."

ANNOUNCER #2: "We'll have more on the throne as it develops. Now back to Wally, wight in the middle of the wush — *(closing his eyes)* — I always do that." (*A disheveled man wearing a Santa hat staggers onto the stage.*)

WALLY: "Thanks, Will. We're back downtown, where the search for Christmas joy continues...And here comes a jolly fellow now! Let's see if he has the spirit of the season!"

(A disheveled man in a Santa hat and an ugly sweater staggers on — not drunk-staggering, but wired, overcaffeinated, moving in little bursts. He is singing at roughly double speed.)

Jittery Man: *(very fast)* "JackFroshtroashtingonanopenfire-chestnutshnippingatyournose— *(to Wally, holding up the bucket)* Yeah. Yeah. I've got the spirits of Christmas right here, buddy."

Wally: "Sir, is that — is that coffee?"

Jittery Man: "This is my fourth. *(Holds up the second cup.)* This is my fifth. I'm holding it for later. Later is in about ninety seconds."

Wally: "Would you mind sharing your Christmas joy with our—"

Jittery Man: "Six parties. *(Counting fast on shaking fingers.)* Six. Parties. Today. The Hendersons, the church thing, the other church thing, the neighbor's, the one I wasn't invited to, and work. Forty cookies, Chuck. **Forty.** Plus the punch. There were two liters of that red punch and I will tell you right now, nobody knows what's in it. Nobody knows, Chuck!"

Wally: "It's Wally."

Jittery Man: "And then there's the **fudge**. *(He stops dead. Stares into the middle distance.)* There was a sleeve of fudge in my car. There **was**."

Wally: *(trying to get in)* "Sir, if I could just ask what the season—"

Jittery Man: "You want to know what Christmas is really about? *(Leaning in, coffee sloshing dangerously.)* It's about the cookie exchange. And I'll tell you what's wrong with the cookie exchange, Chuck. **Brenda.**"

Wally: "...Wally."

Jittery Man: "Brenda brought store-bought. In a **tin**. With a doily in it, like we wouldn't know. *(Voice rising.)* I brought seven dozen, three varieties, with a **spreadsheet**, and Brenda walks in with a tin from the gas station and takes home a plate of MY SNICKERDOODLES—"

Wally: "Sir—"

Jittery Man: "—and nobody said anything! Nobody ever says anything! You know how long it's been since somebody gave me a present? Never. Not once, not ever, anyway what was the question?"

Wally: *(caught off guard, softening)* "...I'm sorry, did you say never?"

Jittery Man: "Yeah. *(Instantly bright again, gesturing broadly with the bucket.)* Doesn't matter! Doesn't matter! Because I have **coffee**, and I have **cookies**, and I am going to be awake for Christmas if it KILLS ME—"

(On the big gesture, the whole bucket of coffee goes down the front of Wally's coat.)

Wally: *(arms out, dripping)* "...Oh."

Jittery Man: *(staring at it, genuinely stricken)* "Oh no. Oh no no no. That's a dark roast, buddy. That's gonna **set**. Here, lemme get it—"

(He grabs for Wally's cut-off sleeve to wipe it with and finds nothing but bare arm. He stops. Stares at the arm. Looks at Wally's other arm. Looks back.)

Jittery Man: "...Where'd your arm go?"

Wally: "It's a long story."

Jittery Man: *(whispering, horrified)* "Did you drink the punch?"

Wally: "No, sir."

Jittery Man: *(nodding slowly, backing off)* "Smart. Smart man."

(He takes a long pull from the second cup — and then it begins. The words start coming slower. His eyelids get heavy. He is powering down in real time.)

Jittery Man: "Anyway. The thing about Brenda is... the thing about... Brenda... is that the tin was... *(very slowly)* ...the tin was from a... gas... station..."

(He stops. Blinks. Then, with great courtesy, he hands Wally the second cup — making sure Wally has a good grip on it — and collapses face-first onto the floor. Out cold.)

Wally: *(alone, coffee down his front, holding a stranger's cup, to the camera)* "...Will? Will, I'm going to need a minute."

(A long beat. The Jittery Man snores once, loudly, and mumbles.)

Jittery Man: *(muffled, into the floor)* "...Brenda..."

(During Wally's next line, one of the passing shoppers wanders on, grabs the Jittery Man by the ankles without a word, and drags him offstage. Wally watches him go and pointedly does not comment.)

Announcer #1: (*wryly*) "There's nothing that can keep his Christmas spirits down. (*With a discouraged demeanor*) It seems this city needs a visit from the Spirit of Christmas Past. Because the Christmas Present seems to have been shoplifted.

Announcer #2: Let's see if Wally can try just one more time. (*The Indignant Man has come onto the stage with a swagger and his nose held high, using his umbrella as a cane.*)

Wally: Excuse me sir! Please tell us how celebrating Christmas... (*he notices his demeanor and slows down*) brings you... (*says almost fearfully*) ...joy?"

Indignant Man: (*Speaking haughtily and with a angry sneer*) "How dare you approach me with the idea of celebrating Christmas! That pagan, commercialized excuse for running up credit card bills, worshipping at the false altar of SANTA CLAUS and getting drunk! (*sniffs Wally*) Hah! You smell like a gas station! The materialism, the greed, the mad rush for WHAT?! I tell you, it's EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLL! (*he leans over Wally as he says this, and Wally leans back fearfully*) PURE EEEEEEEEEEVILLLLLLLLL! (*they do it again*) Look at me! I don't participate in this heathen rite and I HAVE THE (*punctuates each word by hitting Wally with his umbrella*) TRUE... JOY... OF THE... LORD!!! HO, HO, HO!!! (*stalks off*)

(*Wally is beaten down to the ground and huddles there, sobbing. The Helpful Person has come upon Wally and stoops to help him.*)

The Helpful Person: (*concerned*) "Is everything okay there, fella?"

Wally: (*through his sobs and lifting his microphone up to him.*) "Sir...would you care to share your Christmas joy with our viewing audience?"

The Helpful Person: "Well, sure. But let's see what we can do for you first. Looks like you need attention a lot more than I do. (*helps Wally to his feet*) Now, what seems to be the difficulty?"

***(Begin Cut #7 on the Soundtrack CD.*** *An instrumental of the song "The Entertainer," it comically speeds up as it progresses.)*

(*Wally launches into a sobbing, nearly inchoherant recap of his experiences, broadly mimicing the behavior of each person he encountered as he rapidly goes through the list.*

The performer should have fun with this, as it is his moment to shine as he blubbers and acts out the day, before he gives out of breath. This comedy bit should last about 30 seconds, or the length of the music on CUT #7.)

The Helpful Person: "Whoa, settle down there, fella! Catch your breath. Sounds like you've just about lost your holiday cheer, my friend."

Wally: "I don't know why people celebrate Christmas if it's such a headache!"

The Helpful Person: "That's because they've forgotten what it's all about."

The Helpful Person: *(Continuing.)* **"**The angel said, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord.' The true joy of the season only belongs to those who know Him. Otherwise it's an exercise in futility!"

Wally: (*Starting to brighten up again.*) "You're right. In all the rush, I tend to forget that sometimes."

The Helpful Person: "So do a lot of people. That's why this time of year is also the most depressing to some. They're basing their happiness on things that soon pass away and it always leaves them feeling empty."

Wally: "I think I understand. They celebrate the coming of Christ into the world but don't invite Him into their own heart."

The Helpful Person: "You've got it! (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, you're not far from the kingdom of God. Why don't we go discuss it over a cup of hot chocolate... my treat." *(Wally walks off with helpful person)*

Announcer #1: (*Panicking*) "Wally we are still live. Wally! *(pauses and returns to professional voice).* Well, Finding the holiday spirit may be difficult to do in all this hustle and bustle... but maybe... just maybe we've been looking in the wrong place.

Announcer #2: Perhaps the key to our holiday hopes lies not in a gift from Macy's, but in the gift God sent to all of us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. This is Will Walker, reporting live from the studios of WWWW TV. Merry Christmas and Goodnight"

(*End music swells up and out and they walk off together, talking.*)

The End