'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE DEATHMAS
A World on Fire Fade In Scene
by Patrick Kapera (with additional material by Cameron Haigh)

SCENE: THE GONDOLA, JUST OFF THE PACIFIC COAST
25 December 2007, 1:27am — Christmas Morning

OPENING
Grandfather Frost, Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas, Kris Kringle, Santa Claus: legends all, or more accurately myth. Everyone knows Santa isn't real — everyone that is, but the children, in whose dreams he makes the rounds each year, bringing happiness and presents to all the nice boys and girls. They leave out cookies and milk, sherry and mince pies, and carrots for his reindeer, in hopes that he'll remember their good deeds, and sometimes forget the bad. They write letters and wish lists, and visit him in shopping malls everywhere. Their parents indulge them, letting them dream as long as they can, because that's the magic of childhood: dreams without limit, faith without question. At some point, though, everyone grows up and leaves Santa behind. They abandon their fancy and Christmas becomes merely special, rather than magical. Little do they know... that's just as Santa prefers.

This Christmas, one lucky group of agents learns the truth — and has the chance to save Christmas for everyone. Maybe, just maybe, they'll also remember what it's like to dream.

OBJECTIVES
- Escape the Project: Pitfall forces
- Save Santa Claus so he can finish his deliveries across the globe

CHALLENGES
- Save Santa and his reindeer
- Keep innocent bystanders safe

SYNOPSIS
Scene Type: Dramatic
Campaign Qualities: *Black and white* (+0 XP), *bulletproof* (–75 XP)
GC Briefing: While delivering presents to the "nice" Banshees aboard the Gondola, their stealth-equipped helicarrier (and dropping off some coal for those who weren't), Santa is spotted by recent radar upgrades put in place by Project: Pitfall. Per protocols instituted for just such an occasion — Pitfall knows about the Gondola but has had trouble locating it — jump jets are sent to intercept, board, and seize the Banshees' new mobile headquarters. Realizing he's brought the villains right to the Gondola, Santa attempts to draw them away, but the sudden attack leaves him gravely injured and his sleigh spinning out of control. The only people close enough to help? The player characters, who found the sleigh only minutes before and who stowed away when it shot into the night sky.

Special Note: This scene is intended to run with equal parts action and whimsy. When in doubt, imagine what Tony Scott or Michael Bay would do. Keep the energy high and promote brave and daring risks with a steady flow of action dice. Keep the pressure high as well, as the odds and stakes are both as high as the air battle, but don't let the mood turn grim; the second the romp ends, so does Christmas.

Gear: Possessions only

LOCATION

The scene begins in the open air above the Pacific Ocean but soon shifts toward the coast and into San Francisco Bay, where the quarters grow tight and the risk to civilians mounts. A dense fog envelops the city this night, which just might keep Santa's secret alive. Sadly, it may also spell his fatal end unless the characters can navigate their way through the mist-choked streets.

Ambiance: The pleasant jingle of reindeer bells against the staccato drive of machine gun fire; the calming waft of peppermint and nutmeg combating the sulfuric smell of spent cartridges and spilt blood; the thrilling rush of dramatic aerial maneuvers thousands of feet over a blurred landscape.

Terrain: Sky (to start)

Cultures Focus: Northern America.

ACTION

Read the following to the players:

"Twas the Night Before Christmas and deep in the helicarrier,
An intruder was stirring to make with the merrier.
He was lively and quick and dressed all in fur,
And thanks to his magic he was naught but a blur.

"He sped through the base, leaving presents and good cheer,
But only to the righteous, to the rest he would sneer.
He left new laptops and programs, new gadgets and kit,
And wished them luck in their mission, they'd need every bit.

"The visit was short, there were many places to be,
But not short enough, as Santa would soon see.
For as he got to his sleigh, concealed from all sight,
A salvo of rockets tore through the night.

"You see, Santa was clever, and his magic was strong,
But local air defense radar had noticed something was wrong.
They scrambled their jets to scout out the skies,
And there they found Banshees, to their delight and surprise.

"Santa leapt to the reins and cried out most dire,
'On Dasher, On Dancer! We must draw their fire!'
The reindeer they strained with all of their might,
And off the sleigh flew, into the chill night.

"The rockets exploded mere feet in its wake
And sent the sleigh tumbling like the lightest snowflake.
Poor Santa flew forward and slammed his forehead
Then dropped to the floor, as heavy as lead.

"So distracted he was, St. Nick never spied
The small group of stowaways along for the ride.
But they could see him and instantly knew
This time they were in deep, deep doo-doo."

'Twas the Night Before Deathmas

This scene plays out as a modified, multi-stage aerial chase. The first Conflict rounds take place a good distance from the coast, but it should soon become obvious that attempting to outdistance or outmaneuver the jets in open air is futile. The characters' only chance is to lead the Pitfall troops into the Bay, or perhaps into the city, and lose them in the dense fog and structures. This is where the second stage of the chase begins, with Pitfall reinforcements arriving in the form of rocket pack-propelled strike troops!

At the start, the Maneuvering Room is Open. The Pitfall forces consist of two jump jet fighters *(see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 240)*, each armed with two remaining 70mm high explosive rockets. These vehicles operate in tandem, making one cooperative Drive/Maneuver check during each Conflict round. The characters all begin in the back of Santa's sleigh, near his enormous (Large), wondrous bag.

Santa's Sleigh (Performance Aircrafts/Animal-Drawn Vehicle): SZ H (2×8, including reindeer); Occ 1+7, A/T 10/10 (with Santa) or 6/6 (without); MPH ~2,500/~4 million (with Santa) or 400/600 (without); Def/Save 22 (with Santa) or 12/+14 (without); Upgrade —; Comp 30/+2; Cargo ~2,000 lbs. (Santa's bag may contain infinite mass and weight but only counts as 50 lbs. of encumbrance in his arms — anyone else must carry the full amount within, which presently exceeds 1 billion lbs.); Range/Fuel ~200 million/holiday cheer; Qualities: APP (6), CMF (all), COM, ENV (arctic, fog (dense) — so long as Rudolph stays alive), FOR, LSP (1 hour), LUX, OPN (1/2 cover), PTP, RGD, STB; Year: 1820s; Street Value: The hopes and wishes of children everywhere (or ~R$400,000,000,000 in adjusted U.S. dollars invested in fruitless research over the next ten years should Pitfall capture the vehicle).

Reindeer (Animal): Init VI; Atk V; Def V; Resilience V; Damage Save VI; Skills: Notice V, Survival III; SZ L; Spd 90 ft. land, 160 ft. flying (solo, without the sleigh); Qualities: *Beast*, *carry on command*, *damage resistance* 8 (cold), *feat* (Arctic Training), *fleet* +60 ft., *flight* 100 ft., *hulking* (Large), *improved hearing*, *improved scent*, *mount*, *natural attack* (gore II), *rescue*, *superior attribute* (Str 18, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 6), *synchronized*.

Sadly, the sleigh was damaged during the initial attack and it's currently spiraling out of control. Righting the vehicle and bringing it level once more requires a successful cooperative Drive/Maneuver check (DC 18 + (2 × Threat Level)). Up to two characters may cooperate to perform this action and each fortunately gains a synergy bonus from Survival. The check may be retried but the characters only have three rounds to succeed; after that they plunge into the ocean, which effectively ends the mission. Industrious GCs might use this opportunity to jumpstart a scenario with the characters in Pitfall custody. Once they escape, there's still the matter of finding and liberating Santa, his sleigh, and the reindeer — possibly from different locations — and making sure they get on their way in time for Christmas.

Until the sleigh is brought under control, the only action available to each non-piloting character during each round is a mandatory Athletics/Strength check (DC 15). With success, the character clings for dear life within the sleigh; however, with failure, the character loses grip and tumbles out into open air, freefalling toward the water. The character hits the water at the same time the sleigh would if not righted, suffering standard falling damage for a 400-ft. drop (if he lost grip during round 3), an 800-ft. drop (if he lost grip during round 2), or a 1,200-ft drop (if he lost grip during round 1). No need to worry for Santa or his bag — the sleigh handily keeps them in tow.

Once the pilots bring the sleigh under control, they can attempt to catch one falling teammate per round, an action that requires a successful cooperative Drive/Maneuver check (DC 15 + (2 × Threat Level). Thanks to the sleigh's magical properties, a caught character suffers only 1d6 falling damage per round he spent in open air.

Assuming the characters manage to right the sleigh, the starting Lead is 5 minus 1 for each failed Drive/Maneuver check made to right the sleigh and minus 1 for each check made to catch a teammate (whether the check was successful or not). Further, the jump jet pilots begin with a number of smash points equal to the number of failed Drive/Maneuver checks + the number of attempts made to catch teammates (whether those attempts were successful or not).

Example: If the sleigh remains out of control for 1 full round and is used to catch 1 falling teammate two rounds later, the starting Lead is 2 and the jump jet pilots start with 3 smash points.

The first round of the chase takes place over the ocean (with Open Maneuvering Room), but at the start of Round 2 the characters can lead the chase toward the bay (Close) or into the city (Tight). This one-time choice requires no Advantage and imposes no Maneuver penalty, but defines conditions for the remainder of the chase. Sticking to the ocean keeps the action away from innocent civilians but places the characters at an extreme disadvantage. The jets have the highest MPH and therefore gain a whopping +6 bonus with their Maneuver checks in the Open area. Also, the characters may not call upon the Pause or Room Advantages while skirting the seas, as there's nowhere for them to hide and no obstacles to exploit. This hinders many of the characters' other actions, such as repairing the sleigh and stabilizing Santa *(see page 6)*.

On the up side, the characters face no complications out over the ocean. Not so in the bay or city, where the GC should roll 1d6 once per chase round and consult the appropriate part of Table 1: Complications *(see page 5)*. The GC should feel free to use these complications as springboards for more action. For instance, when approaching a bridge, the GC might have the characters spot a person about to jump (suicide attempts are at a record high on these bridges, particularly around the holidays). If the characters attempt to catch the jumper as he falls — an action applying a –4 penalty with their Maneuver check for the round — they automatically gain 2 bonus action dice, as well as the company of a despondent NPC to whom they can convince life is worth living.

Another option might involve a late-night couple seeing the sleigh nestled in the Christmas display *(see city result 5)*, leading the girl to drag her boyfriend to take pictures with it. These two might still be present when the Pitfall forces figure out where they lost the sleigh and arrive back on the scene.

Also, a dense fog cloaks the bay and city, applying the standard effects listed on page 351 of the *Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook*. Fortunately for the characters, so long as Rudolph remains with the sleigh those within suffer only 1/2 the standard penalties (rounded down).

The jets stay with the characters for only 3 chase rounds in the bay, or 1 chase round in the city; thereafter, they veer off, leaving the characters alone for 1 round before a horde of rocketeers arrives, resuming the chase at the same lead the jets had when they left. A second horde arrives four rounds later, unless the characters have managed to escape, ending the scene.

It's entirely possible the arrival of the rocketeers might shift the scene from a chase to a combat. The GC should run with this, as it's an eminently satisfying way for the mission to close. The GC should avoid running this combat on a map, however, as the third dimension will only complicate range and line of sight calculations. It's best to keep things fluid and descriptive, with everyone relying on the GC to convey his "mental landscape" through actions and results.

Under the right circumstances, the GC may also wish to offer the characters a hint: with a successful Athletics/Climb check (DC 15), a character may crawl from the sleigh to a reindeer, and with a successful Mechanics/Disable check (DC 10), the character can unleash the reindeer to become an independently flying mount. The reindeer accepts the character without question if Santa is awake *(see Stabilizing Santa, page 6)*; otherwise, a successful Survival/Animal Training check (DC 20) is required to bring the beast to heel. Removing up to four reindeer has no impact on the sleigh's statistics — unless the reindeer is Rudolph, in which case the sleigh loses the benefits of his nose. Any characters on reindeer mounts other than Rudolph likewise lose this benefit.

Table 1: Complications

Location/Result	Occurrence
Bay	
1–2	Nothing
3	The chase drops low over a cruise ship heading out to sea. If an attack made with a vehicular weapon during this round results in an error, the opposing participant may spend 2 action dice to cause it to go wild, heading for the ship. The characters may intercept the attack with a successful Maneuver check (DC 20), though this inflicts the attack's damage on the sleigh.
4	The chase approaches one of San Francisco's bridges. Each participant must make a Maneuver check (DC 20) or clip a suspension cable or other obstruction, inflicting collision damage as appropriate to their vehicle. With a critical failure, the vehicle crashes.
5	The chase skirts alongside a tall cliff. Participants choosing the Double Back, Shortcut, or Weave Strategies suffer a –2 penalty. If the characters win this round, they may apply the Impact Advantage with any Strategy, dragging part of the sleigh along the cliff and sending rubble down upon the jets behind them. Beyond the standard effects of an Impact Advantage, this also inflicts a –2 penalty to the jet pilots' Maneuver checks during the next round.
6	The jets force the chase inland over hills and coast-side houses, until the characters' only options are to enter a tunnel leading to the city or suddenly pull up, a task requiring a successful Maneuver check (DC 25). If they lead the sleigh into the tunnel, the next two chase rounds happen mere feet over a light stream of traffic. No participants may benefit from smash points during this time, and the winner of each round gains 1 additional Advantage choice. Whether the characters pull up over the hill or speed through the tunnel, the chase then shifts to the city and the Maneuvering Room becomes Tight.
City	
1–2	Nothing
3	The chase drops low over the streets and as the participants make a sharp series of turns between buildings the vehicles find themselves fast approaching a series of skywalks. Either participant may accept a –3 penalty with their Maneuver check during this round to avoid them, or smash through them, suffering collision damage as appropriate.
4	Pitfall coordinates with local law enforcement to block the sleigh's path using the only things they have at their disposal that are tall enough: parade floats. The chase slows down and levels off as the vehicles angle around Snoopy and Superman, making it easier for the participants to interact. Both the current speed and the distance between vehicles — for the purposes of attacks and other targeted effects only — decrease to 1/2 standard (rounded down).
5	The chase nears one of the city's giant Christmas displays, which centers on an enormous 80 ft., fully decorated tree. If the characters win this round, they may apply the Pause Advantage with any Strategy, setting down next to the tree as if part of the display. The pursuers fly over, losing track of them for a moment before doubling back. In this case, the characters benefit from twice the standard effects of a Pause Advantage. Also, any number of characters can leave the sleigh, moving into the city to conduct more mayhem.
6	The police presence in the city gets a little too dense, granting the jet pilots a +2 bonus with their Maneuver check during each round. The only way for the characters to counter this is to head back out over the ocean, shifting the Maneuvering Room to Open once more.

Sleigh Repairs

The sleigh was badly damaged by the rocket attack and until it's repaired all Maneuver checks made with it suffer a –4 gear penalty. Repairing the sleigh involves a Complex check with 4 Challenges. Up to two characters may cooperate to complete each Challenge. No more than one Challenge may be attempted each round, but with each completed Challenge the sleigh's Maneuver penalty decreases by 1 (i.e. to –3 with 1 completed Challenge, –2 with 2 completed Challenges, and so on).

A Moment of Calm: For 1 full round after each time the Pause Advantage is applied in the team's favor, each character gains a +2 bonus with all checks made as part of this Complex check.

- *Challenge 1:* The rear of the sleigh is wrecked and hemorrhaging a steady stream of sparkling dust. (This is, in fact, the sleigh's fuel: holiday cheer.) Repairing the leak requires a successful Mechanics/Repair check (DC 10 + (2 × Threat Level)).
- *Challenge 2:* The tank's repaired but the sleigh's still dangerously low on fuel. Normally, Santa would just refill it with a twinkle of his eye, but he's out just now, so the characters are on their own. There are a number of options, none of which should be made available to the characters until they guess them on their own (the elves didn't leave a manual, after all). Mechanically, the tank can be refilled with a successful Impress/Performance or Tactics/Rally check (DC 10 + (2 × Threat Level)). This performance must have a cheerful holiday theme — a smiling rendition of *Oh Come All Ye Faithful!*, for example, or a spoons version of *Little Drummer Boy* using candy canes, or even exalting the reindeer by name. Alternately, the tank may be refilled with no check if two or more characters, in unison, sing one full verse from any holiday song or if, at any point while this check is going on one or more *players or characters* laugh or cheer, or perform an act of kindness (e.g. drawing fire, buying someone a soda, or offering their dice to another). In this last case, the GC should work the cheer or kindness into the scene if possible, or just have the vehicle suddenly lurch forward with renewed power to the mysterious sound of sleigh bells in the air.
- *Challenge 3:* The sleigh's finally zipping along at full power but it's veering out of control on occasion. A quick glance reveals that this has something to do with a stabilizing rudder built into the sleigh's undercarriage. That's right: to complete this Challenge, the character(s) must climb *under* the sleigh and perform the repairs while hanging upside down! This requires multi-tasking: a successful Athletics/Climb check and a successful Mechanics check, both at DC 15.
- *Challenge 4:* Realigning the rudder reveals another crack in the sleigh, this one revealing a delicate electronic guidance system built into the carriage! The sleigh continues to jerk and jump until the characters manage a successful Electronics check (DC 20 with an error range increase of +1). Again, characters making this check must multi-task with the aforementioned Athletics/Climb check.

Stabilizing Santa

Santa has taken shrapnel from his own sleigh and is bleeding internally. Due to the magical nature of his biology, the DCs to stabilize him and perform surgery to repair the bleeding increase by 3 each (to 18 and 23, respectively). The Medicine/Stabilize check takes 1 full round as normal, but due to his fast healing abilities the Surgery check drops from one 8-hr. check to a 3-Challenge Complex check, each check taking 1 full round. All other modifiers apply as standard.

The first surgery Challenge involves cutting Saint Nick open and finding the source of the bleed, the second repairs it, and the third closes him up. For two chase rounds after the surgery, Santa remains still, his breathing shallow. At the beginning of the third round he sits up suddenly, bellowing "Ho Ho Ho!" Thanks to the characters' efforts, his wound is completely healed and he's ready to take his proper place at the reins again. From this point on, he chooses chase Strategies of the team's choice (though in game they're his, so the team can focus on other things). He possesses a Drive skill bonus of +2 higher than the highest Drive skill bonus in the team, or equal to the team's average level + 2, whichever is greater, and he benefits from the Baby It, Daredevil, Demolition Derby, Need for Speed, One Hand on the Wheel..., and Wind Rider feats, as well as *vehicle familiarity II* with the sleigh.

For brutal characters, however, there's a slight downside to Santa's return. Per the GC's discretion, any action taken that would directly result in bodily harm to another person — including the Pitfall troops — magically fails *after the hit or success*. Damaging the Pitfall vehicles is fine, as they're equipped with emergency escape options, but Santa can't abide intentional violence. He simply waves his index finger at offending characters, smiling wryly at their surprise, and delights in mocking those who press the issue. "Naughty children break their toys," he says, and "No smiles for little ruffians!"

A Moment of Calm: For 1 full round after each time the Pause Advantage is applied in the team's favor, each character gains a +2 bonus with all checks made to stabilize or perform surgery on Santa.

The Big, Wondrous Bag

Each character may pull and unwrap a present from Santa's bag, a process that takes 1 full round. The bag is magical and recognizes each character's worthiness, adjusting the contents of each present as it's pulled, but since the characters are all working to save Christmas there's no need to worry about whether they've been naughty. When a character pulls a present, he rolls 3d10 and consults Table 2: Santa's Bag *(see below)*. Every present is hand-labeled to the character who pulls it, no matter what they pull, and all subsequent boxes a character pulls are filled with coal.

Table 2: Santa's Bag	
Result	Item
3	Common Item (any 1 of the character's choice)
4	Winch grapple gun
5	Encrypted tactical headset pointed at the Pitfall jets' frequency
6	Police scanner
7	Jammer (PR 6)
8	Audio/video transmitter (PR 8)
9	Skill check gadget (any 1 skill check, PR 5)
10	Attribute boost gadget (any 1 of the character's choice, PR 2)
11	Silence gadget (PR 4)
12	Moving hologram gadget
13	Flight gadget (1 hour battery life)
14	Any 1 piece of armor or protective gear up to Caliber III (character's choice)
15	Any handgun up to Caliber III (character's choice, 1 load of ammo)
16	Any rifle up to Caliber III (character's choice, 1 load of ammo)
17	Bag full of guns (Caliber III)
18	Damage resistance gadget (any 1 of the character's choice, PR 8)
19	Defense boost gadget (PR 4)
20	Damage reduction gadget (PR 4)
21	Healing gadget (PR 4)
22	Vehicle defense system (PR 5, character's choice of type, 1 full action to attach to sleigh)
23	Any 1 piece of armor or protective gear up to Caliber V (character's choice)
24	Any handgun up to Caliber V (character's choice, 1 load of ammo)
25	Any rifle up to Caliber V (character's choice, 1 load of ammo)
26	Bag full of guns (Caliber V)
27	Attack gadget (PR 8)
28	Single-shot light IR-guided anti-air missile launcher (1 full action to attach to sleigh)
29	GPS unit linked to Santa's satellite (+1 to Maneuver checks during this chase)
30	Weather control device (constrained, PR 3, 1 use only with a 2-round battery life)

CAST

"Humbug" (Special NPC, Antagonist)

"You wanna see a Christmas miracle? Get a life!"

Description: Raven hair so perfectly groomed and heavily shalaqued you'd think it was one piece glued onto his skull, perpetual grimace/sphincter clench, always fingering a piece of worn coal (the same one his father used to joke about putting in his stocking)

Motivations: Carl Fetters has despised Christmas since he witnessed a drunken mall Santa run over his father on their way home from caroling. Now he works a triple shift every Christmas just to get through (thus his callsign: HUMBUG). This year, at long last, he just might get his chance at revenge.

Initiative		Attack		Defense		Resilience		Vitality/Wound Points	
Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	v/wp
VI		VIII		VI		V		V	

Competence: III   **Default Skill Bonus:** +_____

Drive		Intimidate		Search		Notice		Mechanics	
Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	v/wp
IX		VII		IX		IV		IV	

Weapons: 9mm P H&K USP service pistol (dmg 1d10+1 lethal, error 1, threat 20, ammo 15M2, recoil 15, range 25 ft., SZ/Hand D/1h, qualities: CMP)

Vehicles: Jump jet fighter (SZ H (15×2, W6), Occ 1, A/T 7/8, MPH 500/745, D/S 8/+10, Comp 37/+2, Cargo 25 lbs., Range 3/J, Qualities: CHF, CMF (sky), EJS, HDP (6), HOB (thermal G), TRO, UNF, SEN (radar 5, thermal 5), VTL, WPN (20mm Gatling, 2 x 70mm high explosive rockets)

Wealth: I (Lifestyle 2, Possessions 1, Spending Cash 1)

Gear: Military flight suit and helmet, flask of whiskey ("spiced" with just enough peppermint liqueur to remind him what he hates), pack of smokes (unfiltered and doodled to look like candy canes)

Qualities: *Class ability* (*driven, daredevil, drivers only* (gunnery, most lethal), *no fear I*), *fearless, feat* (Driving Instincts, Offensive Driving), *henchman, Specialty* (Thrill-Seeker), *superior attribute* (Dex 17, Int 14), *Talented* (Clever)

Notes: None

"Short Straw" (Standard NPC, Antagonist)

*"Again? That isn't statistically **possible**!"*

Description: Lanky and somewhat gaunt, slight overbite, thinning hair, dispassionate stare (like he's considering how best to take everything apart and put it back together again)

Motivations: Humbug's wingman this evening is the terminally unlucky Able Went, who can't catch a break (in part because his cruel squadron-mates won't let him). He's been subjected to pretty much every crap duty and shift his Corp has to offer — and a few that his tormentors made up. He's always had a slow-boil temper and he's about to crack *(see Notes on page 9)*.

Initiative		Attack		Defense		Resilience		Damage Save	
Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	v/wp
IV		III		IV		V		V	

Competence: V   **Default Skill Bonus:** +_____

Drive		Analysis		Electronics		Mechanics	
Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	v/wp
V		X		IX		VI	

Weapons: 9mm P H&K USP service pistol (dmg 1d10+1 lethal, error 1, threat 20, ammo 15M2, recoil 15, range 25 ft., SZ/Hand D/1h, qualities: CMP)

Vehicles: Jump jet fighter (SZ H (15×2, W6), Occ 1, A/T 7/8, MPH 500/745, D/S 8/+10, Comp 37/+2, Cargo 25 lbs., Range 3/J, Qualities: CHF, CMF (sky), EJS, HDP (6), HOB (thermal G), TRO, UNF, SEN (radar 5, thermal 5), VTL, WPN (20mm Gatling, 2 x 70mm high explosive rockets)

Wealth: VIII (Lifestyle 6, Possessions 3, Spending Cash 6)

Gear: Military flight suit and helmet, acorn, rabbit's foot, four-leaf clover (fourth leaf attached with transparent tape), healthy length of straw (hidden up sleeve, for the next time)

Qualities: *Achilles heel* (stress), *class ability* (*assistance I, astute, bookworm I, generous*), *improved vision, inferior attribute* (Wis 7*), minion, superior attribute* (Cha 13, Int 19), *tough I, treacherous*

Notes: Should any character score a threat with an Intimidate or Manipulate skill check, or a Called Shot, Cheap Shot, or Disarm action targeting Short Straw, he may spend a total of 2 action dice to activate it as a critical success, leaving him *enraged*. The GC should not explain what the extra die is for when he gives the characters the option, though he might work in signs of Short Straw's weakness through earlier roleplay.

Pitfall Rocketeers (Standard NPCs, Antagonists)

"Target sighted, boys. Let's smear 'em!"

Description: Wild yet glassy-eyed determination, custom flight suits with personalized patches, airbrushing, and other detail work, obviously experimental rocket packs bearing kill tallies

Motivations: These troops know they're guinea pigs for test technology, which simultaneously thrills and terrifies them. They're running on adrenaline pretty much from the moment the packs are ignited to the moment they crash in drunken hazes a few hours after they drop the combustible loads. Basically, they're your garden-variety rock-jock cowboys, alternating between insane bravado and blind, reckless self-destruction.

Initiative		Attack		Defense		Resilience		Damage Save	
Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	v/wp
IV		III		II		II		II	

Competence: II   **Default Skill Bonus:** +_____

Acrobatics		Athletics		Notice		Resolve		Tactics	
Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	Bonus	Numeral	v/wp
VII		III		V		V		IV	

Weapons: H&K G36 assault rifle (dmg 4d4 lethal, error 1–3, threat 20, ammo 30M3, recoil 12, range 125 ft., SZ/Hand S/2h, qualities: CLS, CMP, DEP, UPG (advanced combat sight)); 9mm P H&K USP service pistol (dmg 1d10+1 lethal, error 1, threat 20, ammo 15M2, recoil 15, range 25 ft., SZ/Hand D/1h, qualities: CMP), 1 adhesive 1-lb. thermite charge (dmg 2d10 fire (AP 24), error 1–5, SZ/Hand F/—, qualities: BLS (5 ft.), SUS (fire))

Vehicles: Rocket pack *(see qualities and notes, below)*

Wealth: III (Lifestyle 2, Possessions 2, Spending Cash 2)

Gear: Military flight suit and helmet *(reinforced to provide a small amount of additional DR — see qualities, below)*, inventory clicker (for keeping kill tally until potential return to base), stogie (for toasting survival at the arse end of another mission)

Qualities: *Class ability* (*dexterous, evasion I, uncanny dodge I*), *commander, damage reduction 1/—, feat* (Combat Instincts, Combat Mobility, Horde Basics), *flight 80 ft., horde, minion, removable quality* (flight — jet pack), *Specialty* (Special Ops), *superior attribute* (Dex 16), *synchronized, Talented* (Agile)

Notes: The rocketeers' jet packs are susceptible to attacks that puncture their fuel tanks. This operates the same as the special 4-action die critical hit option for flamethrowers *(see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 314)*. Each jet pack has a Damage save of +5 and explodes with a damage value of 12d6.

NEXT STEPS

With Santa safe, it's time for him to get on with the business of Christmas. He thanks the characters for their help and promises them great surprises under the tree next year, but he still has one small favor to ask today. He's already delivered a present to Stephen Century, the virtuous beleaguered and head of Project: Pitfall, but in light of the unfortunate events of the last several minutes, he thinks it's best to send a different message. He hands the characters a lump of coal and another mission: replace the present, which is currently on Century's desk in Amsterdam's Triumph Tower. Before the characters can remind Santa just how heavy the tower's security is, the jolly gift-giver has whisked up to his sleigh and is calling for the reindeer to take off...

REWARDS AND PENALTIES

Success	Base XP Reward
A. Team pulls the sleigh out of its death spiral on rounds 2 or 3	25 XP
B. Team pulls the sleigh out of its death spiral on round 1	50 XP
A. Team partially repairs the sleigh	25 XP
B. Team completely repairs the sleigh	50 XP
A. Team stabilizes Santa	25 XP
B. Team stops Santa's bleeding	50 XP
A. Characters escape without killing any adversaries	50 XP
A. No innocent civilians are harmed	50 XP
A. Team wins the chase	100 XP
A. Character fails to give any of Santa's presents back	Special*

* The character receives naught but coal and faulty gear for the next decade.

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