

BELIEVE

Written by

Serge Magnavox

FADE IN:

1

INT. ANDY'S APARTMENT - LIVING-ROOM. NIGHT

1

ANDY'S apartment is barely decorated for Christmas. A mini plastic Christmas tree and a still Dancing Santa figurine sit on a table. A clock in the room reads: December 24 8:45 P.M

ANDREA ESPINOZA (Andy) unlocks the door to the apartment and enters looking into her cell phone. She wears a heavy jacket over her police uniform with her gun inside its holster and handcuffs still attached to her utility belt.

An answering machine turns on and HAROLD, Andy's father, is heard speaking coldly.

HAROLD (V.O.)

Andy, your mother told me to tell you that she's hosting a party at 9 tonight at her place. You're probably working anyway-- unless you've finally been shot or something.

(Laughter)

Anyway, thought I'd let you know. Oh and uh, any update about that shared Netflix account? I was hoping to get the password tonight so me and my girls can watch Home Alone. We do that every Christmas eve. Thanks, bye.

The answering machine clicks off.

ANDY

Daughter's, huh?

Andy looks at the time.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Yeah, tell me about the party 15 minutes prior. Merry Christmas to you too, asshole.

ANDY throws her phone onto her couch and casually tosses her jacket onto a different piece of furniture. She sighs loudly hurling her body onto the couch. She rubs her face from stress.

The HOUSE PHONE rings loudly causing ANDY to jump out of her spot and lunge herself at the phone. She manages to take the call. Joyful Christmas music is heard through the phone.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
This is Espinoza.

MARTHA (V.O)  
Andy! I didn't know if you'd be  
back home or not but I am so glad  
you picked up.

ANDY smiles warmly.

ANDY  
Hey, mom.

MARTHA (V.O)  
Listen Chad and the boys already  
made dinner and--

ANDY  
Well- mom, listen...

MARTHA (V.O)  
They have been carolling since 5!  
Let me tell you this years  
turducken is like nothing you've  
ever tasted before!

ANDY rises off of the couch with the phone in hand. She  
grimaces away from the phone.

MARTHA (V.O) (CONT'D)  
We'll make sure to make you a plate  
and save you a seat at the table  
next to Michael. Oh, you've got to  
see how he painted his model of the  
solar system. The kid just might be  
the new Picasso.

ANDY sighs sadly and begins to nervously pace around her  
apartment.

ANDY  
I'm sorry, that all sounds great,  
but I can't make it.

MARTHA (V.O)  
Oh no, are you working the holiday  
again?! Tell the boys at the  
station you need to have a life  
too!

ANDY  
No, I...

ANDY stops in place. She looks at an old family picture in the corner of the room with just Andy, Martha and Harold.

MARTHA (V.O)

Honey, you ok? Are you ill? Do I need to come over with wellness soup?

ANDY

I'm a little tired...  
(beat)  
And I just heard about the party from a voicemail from dad.

MARTHA (V.O)

Again?! It's my fault I shouldn't have let Harold be the one--

ANDY

No, it's ok. I just got off work anyhow. Might as well head to bed since it's late.

MARTHA (V.O)

You're kidding! If I didn't know you better I'd say you stopped believing in Christmas!

MARTHA laughs.

ANDY fakes a smile, her eyes glistening.

ANDY

(Sadly)  
Goodnight, mom. I love you.

MARTHA (V.O)

Wh-- I love you too, honey. Merry Christmas!

ANDY hangs up the phone and looks back at the picture bitterly.

She impulsively picks up the phone and dials Harold's number. It goes straight to voicemail.

ANDY

Hey, dad. Just calling about the Netflix password. Excuse my timing. The password is F-U-C-K, and then the word YOURSELF, all caps no spaces.

Andy hangs up the phone.

2 INT. ANDY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

2

ANDY, too tired to change out of her uniform throws herself into bed.

TIME LAPSE:

The clock reads 9:00 P.M then reads 12:10 A.M. Andy tosses and turns in bed.

Loud rustling and music are heard from the living-room.

Andy's eyes shoot wide open at the sounds. She jumps out of bed, grabs the gun from her holster and marches to the living-room on guard.

3 INT. ANDY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

3

Andy's LIVING ROOM is now fully decorated for Christmas.

An old man wearing a SANTA costume with a realistic beard is setting up a full sized Christmas tree while humming to *Jingle Bell Rock*. A plate of chocolate chip cookies is placed next to the operative *Dancing Santa* figure.

Andy silently approaches SANTA from behind with the gun pointing directly at him.

ANDY (O.S.)

Put down the tree and step away  
from the (beat) chocolate chip  
cookies?

Santa lets out a yelp and drops the upper half of the tree. He slowly turns to face Andy. When his eyes meet hers, he smiles brightly.

SANTA

Merry Christmas officer!

Andy believes she's dreaming for a second. She looks over at the clock reading 12:12 A.M. then shifts her firm gaze back to SANTA.

ANDY

It's Christmas day! You've got  
nothing better to do than rob an  
officer in the middle of the  
night!?

SANTA  
 Robbing? Officer, I'm not taking  
 things, I'm putting things in their  
 rightful place.

Andy, looking down at Santa's boots, sees a large, red sack.  
 She firmly grips her gun, suspicious of the sack's contents.

ANDY  
 Hand's up! What's in the bag?

SANTA  
 Nothing anymore.

SANTA looks around the apartment gleefully.

ANDY  
 You're under arrest for breaking  
 and entering. You have the right to  
 remain silent. Anything you say can  
 and will be used against you in a  
 court of law...

SANTA takes a cookie off of the table and bites into it.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
 Hey! Are you kidding me right now?

SANTA  
 Your house sure needed cheering up.  
 It's alright, take it all in.

Santa wafts at the bowl of cookies blowing the scent to Andy.

ANDY  
 Ok that's it, hands behind your  
 back!

SANTA  
 If you say so.

SANTA happily does as he's told.

4

EXT. ANDY'S APARTMENT. NIGHT

4

Andy forces the now handcuffed SANTA towards her car.

Santa, still smiling, does not resist Andy's orders.

SANTA  
 Where to now, Andy?

Surprised, Andy stops walking forward.

ANDY  
How'd you know my name? You did  
search my house didn't you!?

Santa shakes his head.

SANTA  
It was on the stocking!

Santa laughs.

ANDY  
I'm taking you to the station smart  
ass.

SANTA  
I'd prefer it if you called me  
Nick, though most just call me  
Santa.

ANDY  
Of course, "Mr. Claus."

Andy opens the door to the back of the car with one hand  
while holding Santa's hands with the other. She points into  
the back of the car aggressively.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
Get in the car.

SANTA  
We're not taking the cop car?

ANDY  
You should be lucky that I'm not on  
duty.

SANTA  
Aww that's bad luck. I really  
wanted you to put the lights on  
and...

SANTA makes the sounds of a cop car energetically.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
Like a super high-speed chase! Look  
out, Mrs.Badass coming through!

Santa chuckles lively.

Andy looks back at Santa with a cold, emotionless face.

ANDY  
Not gonna happen. In!

SANTA frowns and gets into the back seat of the car reluctantly.

SANTA  
Could've at least brought some  
cookies with you.

5 INT. CAR - NIGHT

5

Andy begins driving Santa to the station. He is too quiet in the back seat which makes Andy a little guilty.

ANDY  
What were you doing in my  
apartment?

SANTA  
Decorating.

ANDY  
Cut the act. What were you really  
doing?

SANTA  
Decorating, I said! Your mother  
requested my services.

ANDY  
Services? I Highly doubt that. The  
last thing I need is (beat)  
whatever this is.

SANTA  
But she did. Martha was very  
worried about you. Just before  
going to bed she wished and wished  
for her daughter to have happiness  
this Christmas. I wanted to see why  
her daughter wasn't happy, and now  
we're here.

ANDY  
My mom told you to break into my  
apartment and put new batteries in  
the dancing Santa? That's a new  
one.

SANTA  
Not exactly, I never liked those  
dancing things. I only brought it  
back to life for you.



6 INT. ANDY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY 6

It's Christmas day. The house decorated for Christmas. Harold is giving Andy(7) a dancing Santa toy. Delighted, she dances along with it. Harold and Martha join her in dancing.

7 INT. CAR - LATER 7

Andy continues driving to the station, grimacing at the memory.

ANDY

I don't even know why I keep that thing.

SANTA

I think you do. Why didn't you go to the party?

ANDY

It's too late.

8 INT. ANDY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY 8

Andy (13) walks into her home excited. Her parents are throwing a party, the living room is filled with friends of both Harold and Martha.

Harold and Martha are verbally fighting. Harold throws a bottle of liquor across room. It hits the wall barely missing Martha's head.

ANDY (V.O.)

Besides, I'm not much of a party goer.

People at the party begin leaving, walking past a stunned Andy. A few guests hold a belligerent Harold back and console a sobbing Martha.

BACK TO:

9 INT. CAR - NIGHT 9

ANDY

Never was.

SANTA

That's too bad. Turducken is your favorite!

Andy chuckles dryly and rolls her eyes.

ANDY

I doubt mom even made it. Probably just made Michael's favorite meatloaf or Chad's ham with pineapple rings.

SANTA

Andy! Are you calling your mom a liar?

ANDY

Not a liar. She means well, but face the facts. She's no better than dad in that she doesn't mean what she says.

10 EXT. ANDY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

10

Andy(15) is waiting for her mom in a swimming suit on the front porch.

ANDY (V.O.)

She's the type to plan a day at the pool one minute and the next...

Martha arrives with Chad in a car. Chad exits the car and opens the door for Martha. Once she's out, Martha kisses Chad on the lips. The two are lost in a love bubble.

Witnessing this is Andy. She can't be more horrified.

ANDY (V.O.)

...She changes the plan into something you'd never expect. Usually for the worst.

11 INT. ANDY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

11

Andy(15) sits in front of Harold and Martha, sobbing. She's still wearing her swimming suit.

HAROLD

Sorry kiddo, I wanted to tell you sooner but your mom and I are getting a divorce. We started seeing other people just to see if that'll make things easier and you know what? It did.

MARTHA

We can still go to the pool, just  
give me a minute to change and...

Andy storms out of the living room.

BACK TO:

12 INT. CAR - NIGHT

12

ANDY

Even as I was growing up, I  
couldn't see it coming. Fool me  
twice, huh Santa?

SANTA

What would've even been more  
heartbreaking is if he started  
swinging fists instead of throwing  
things.

Andy looks into the rearview mirror expecting an explanation.

SANTA (CONT'D)

But the separation made them never  
fight again.

ANDY

That's because they never saw each  
other again.

13 EXT. ANDY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - NIGHT

13

It's Christmas eve and Harold is closing the back door of a  
moving truck. He gets into the truck and turns on the engine.

Andy(17) is holding Martha's hand, watching him leave. She  
catches a glimpse of him in the side view mirror but he only  
gives her a firm gaze back.

With tears in her eyes, Andy stiffens and prevents herself  
from showing emotion. She tightly grips Martha's hand.

From the passenger window Harold's new wife waves goodbye to  
Andy.

14 INT. CAR - NIGHT

14

ANDY

At least, never in the same way.

Andy yawns.

SANTA

I didn't mean to wake you back there. How about we stop for coffee? My treat. I could use a hot cocoa myself.

Andy sharply pulls the car over to halt.

ANDY

My mom lives in Minnesota and barely has time for her new kids let alone the time to tell you things about me. I'm not going to ask you again, who are you and what were you doing in my apartment!

SANTA

Andy, I'm Sa--

ANDY

Don't say Santa!

SANTA

But it's true.

ANDY

Yeah, and my mom actually wanted me there for that party tonight. Just tell me the truth!

SANTA

I am who I am. And, she does want you there. Every year she wants you there so she can feel the Christmas spirit again.

ANDY

I can't just drop in on her new family and these stupid parties because I don't care about Christmas!

15

INT. ANDY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - LATER

15

Andy(18) gazes at her lit Christmas tree inside the house. She looks at the old picture of her, Harold and Martha.

Chad and Martha snuggle on the couch holding BABY MICHAEL.

ANDY (V.O.)  
 I stopped caring about Christmas  
 the moment I knew I no longer had a  
 family!

Andy looks back at Martha and Chad. The Christmas tree lights abruptly shut off.

16

INT. CAR - NIGHT

16

A tear rolls down Andy's cheek.

SANTA  
 I can't exactly see how working  
 holidays will heal your heart,  
 Andy.

ANDY  
 And I can't see how I'm going to  
 heal by going back to the people  
 who broke me.

SANTA  
 Andy, those people are broken  
 themselves. Some run away from the  
 image of being shattered. But some  
 stay to pick up the pieces, their  
 own and the pieces of people they  
 care about. Look around you, who  
 ran and who still tries?

ANDY  
 All I see is my mom holding a  
 stranger's hand and being happy  
 without me.

SANTA  
 Is she happy without you if she  
 reaches out to you? Clearly, she's  
 still missing a piece.

ANDY  
 I don't know how to see what you  
 do. I can barely unsee what I  
 lived.

SANTA  
 Then don't force it. Let go, trust  
 all that is good inside you.  
 Believe.

Andy's phone buzzes loudly. Her mom is calling her. Andy rejects the call and aggressively starts the car engine.

ANDY

A coffee does sound like a good idea.

17 EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

17

Andy parks the car in front of a convenience store. She goes to the back of the car and uncuffs Santa.

ANDY

Wait here. Seriously. I'll give you a ride to wherever you need to go but don't get smart.

Santa grins sheepishly as Andy closes the car door.

18 INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

18

Andy walks into the convenience store and heads to the coffee section.

She presses the buttons to the machine. The coffee begins pouring into the cup but the hot coco section is out of order.

Andy checks her phone while the coffee pours. She looks at how many calls she missed from her mom.

ANDY

You really got me this time.

The machine dings and plays a Christmas tune. Andy takes the coffee to a cashier.

CASHIER

One coffee. Did you find everything you were looking for today mam?

ANDY

Yes, well the hot coco was out of order but you're open today so I'll take what I can get. What do I owe you?

CASHIER

Nothing! It's on the house. Merry Christmas.

ANDY

What is today?

CASHIER  
It's December 25th.

The cashier smiles gleefully.

ANDY  
Right...

Andy walks out of the convenience store.

19

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

19

Andy walks to her car with the coffee.

ANDY  
(To Santa)  
They didn't have coco, what else do  
you drin--

Santa is not in the car. Andy looks around when suddenly sleigh bells ringing from above catch her attention.

Santa calls out "Ho Ho Ho" as he flies away, but we never see him.

Andy smiles slightly and takes a sip of her coffee. She hesitates before setting the coffee on the hood of the car.

Andy takes out her phone and calls her mom.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
Hey, mom. You saved any of that  
Turducken for me?

FADE OUT.