

Gridlock on the Santa Claus Freeway

'Come in, Sierra Charlie One-Two-Three, come in, are you receiving me?'

'Roger, North Pole Control, receiving you loud and clear. Currently proceeding on a bearing of one-eight-five at three thousand feet. Just passed Inverness.'

'Position confirmed, Sierra Charlie One-Two-Three. Weather report for you: icy conditions on the main hills, strong north-easterly blowing. Keep your ear-muffs well strapped on.'

'Ear-muffs tied down by my wife, Control. Don't expect any trouble there.'

'Roger, Sierra Charlie One-Two-Three. Traffic report for you: major tail-back over Edinburgh. We have forty-three sleighs stacked up in the Lothian air-space, and a tail-back northwards. Steer well clear of that area if you can.'

'Roger, North Pole Control, I hear you loud and clear. I can see the tail-back from here, twinkly lights and all. Oops! Tarnation, Comet, can't you watch where you're going! ffzzz..gggg..tttzzzz.ssssch...'

'Come in, Sierra Charlie One-Two-Three, you're breaking up on me. Please repeat last message. Come in, Sierra Charlie One-Two-Three.'

'North Pole Control, this is Sierra Charlie Niner-Niner. We have a problem here...ssshhhzzzziggg...'

'North Pole Control, this is Sierra Charlie One-Two-Three. We've run into to some difficulty here. Your traffic report is out of date. We have a tail-back extending as far north as Perth, and I've just run into it.'

'Understood, Sierra Charlie One-Two-Three. Do you need assistance?'

'Affirmative, Control, I am entangled with Sierra Charlie Niner-Niner and with Sierra Charlie Seven-Two-Eight. We have lost some cargo, and reindeer. Request urgent assistance to get this sorted out.'

'Roger, Sierra Charlie One-Two-Three, will despatch recovery team straight away. North Pole Control calling all sleighs, North Pole Control calling all sleighs, we have a situation over Edinburgh and all points north to Perth and beyond. Major tail-backs building up. Please reduce speed and avoid area if possible. Repeat: we have a situation over Edinburgh and all points north to Perth and beyond. Major tail-backs building up. Please reduce speed and avoid area if possible. North Pole Control calling recovery team Romeo Tango Two-Zero: please proceed immediately to Perth - three-sleigh entanglement.'

'North Pole Control, this is Sierra Charlie Five-Zero-Three, come in please.'

'Sierra Charlie Five-Zero-Three, this is North Pole Control. What is your message?'

'We have hit gridlock over Carlisle, North Pole. We cannot proceed westwards. There are sleighs everywhere here. Do you copy, Control?'

'This is North Pole Control. Gridlock understood. Stand by. This is North Pole Control to all sleighs over Carlisle: all sleighs now empty and returning

northwards, please ascend to ten thousand feet. Repeat, all empty sleighs ascend to ten thousand.'

'North Pole Control, this is Sierra Charlie Three-Four-Niner. You can't do this to us - I'm freezing here and ten thousand feet will turn my beard to icicles.'

'Understood, Three-Four-Niner. This is only a temporary measure. All sleighs southbound over Carlisle, please descend to two thousand five hundred. All sleighs east bound, please ascend to five thousand. All sleighs westbound, please proceed on your journey. Sierra Charlie Five-Zero-Three, you may now proceed.'

'Roger, Control. We're on our way. Thanks, over and out.'

'North Pole Control to Sierra Charlie Three-Four-Niner, you may now descend to six thousand, and proceed on your way. Control to Sierra Charlie Two-Four, come in please, we have an urgent message. Sierra Charlie Two-Four, come in please.'

'North Pole Control, this is Sierra Charlie Two-Four. Receiving you loud and clear. What is your message?'

'State your position please, Sierra Charlie Two-Four.'

'We're at one thousand feet, making a descent on the south side of Edinburgh.'

'Understood, Sierra Charlie Two-Four. We have a message from an adult male resident in Dalhousie Terrace: it says "Please ignore previous letters to Santa, what Laurence really wants is a Lego Undersea set". Do you copy, Sierra Charlie Two-Four?'

'We copy, Control. All in hand. I will make the switch at that address. Over and out.'

'North Pole Control, this is Romeo Tango Two-Zero. We have reached the situation over Perth. This is a real A1-spaghetti down here, Control. Could take some time to shift. There are sleighs, bags of presents, reindeer everywhere. Please despatch backup.'

'Romeo Tango Two-Zero. Backup is presently at a twenty-sleigh pile-up over Moscow. You will have to wait.'

'Understood, Control, but there could be a delay to some deliveries tonight. I'd appreciate backup just as soon as you can make it.'

'OK, Romeo Tango Two-Zero. Do you have any injuries there?'

'Two minor injuries, Control. Driver of Sierra Charlie Niner-Niner has a bloody nose, and Prancer on Sierra Charlie Seven-Two-Eight has fainted. Nothing I can't handle, Control.'

'North Pole Control, come in please. North Pole Control, come in please. This is Sierra Charlie Niner-Niner-Zero, I have an emergency!'

'Go ahead, Sierra Charlie Niner-Niner-Zero, what is your problem?'

'I'm at an address in Aberdeen, just been down the chimney, there was a gang of little boys lying in wait for me. All presents have been stolen; repeat, all presents stolen by gang of little boys!'

'Understood, Sierra Charlie Niner-Niner-Zero. Christmas Police unit Charlie Papa Eight is on its way. Hold the situation until they arrive. Do you copy, Sierra Charlie Niner-Niner-Zero.'

'Understood, North Pole Control. I will hold position on the roof - dang! the little varmints are outside with catapults. Get back, you little fiends! Come on - ow! Hold still, Blitzen! Hold still, Dancer! Whoa! steady girls! Back with you, you little varmints!...'

'Charlie Papa Eight, please proceed with all haste to a one-three-five in Aberdeen. Officer under siege.'

'Charlie Papa Eight, we are responding!'

'North Pole Control, this is Romeo Tango Four-Zero over Moscow. We have completed our mission on the pile-up here. All sleighs back on the road except Sierra Charlie Eight-Seven-Two, which is grounded. Parcels have been transferred to northbound sleigh Eight-Five-Niner. Where do you want me next, Control?'

'This is North Pole Control to Romeo Tango Four-Zero: good work, Vincent! Please proceed with all haste to a situation over Perth; Romeo Tango Two-Zero requires backup.'

'Understood, Control, on my way.'

'Mayday! Mayday! This is Sierra Charlie Three-Four-Niner. My beard is iced up. Am losing height rapidly - now at four thousand and dropping. Antlers covered in icicles. Mayday! Mayday! We're going down...ffftzzztch!'

'Come in please, Sierra Charlie Three-Four-Niner, come in please. Sierra Charlie Three-Four-Niner, please state position. This is North Pole Control to Disaster Recovery crew Delta Romeo Three - please proceed immediately to an area north-east of Carlisle. Santa is down, repeat Santa is down.'

'North Pole Control, this is Sierra Charlie Three-Eight-One. I am in the area, I can see where old Buster has gone down. Am proceeding to assist. Position is eight miles north of Moffat.'

'Good on you, Hector! Delta Romeo Three, did you copy position?'

'Affirmative, Control. Estimated arrival at scene in five minutes.'

'North Pole Control, this is Sierra Charlie Six over Dublin. We have a gridlock situation here...'

'North Pole Control, this is Romeo Tango Four-Zero. We are now over Perth, but there is no sign of a situation. Please confirm location.'

'North Pole Control, this is Romeo Tango Two-Zero over Perth. Where is our backup - you promised it hours ago?'

'North Pole Control to Romeo Tango Four-Zero, please confirm position.'

'This is Romeo Tango Four-Zero - we are over Perth, and the surf is up. But we can't see any situation. Mind if we go for a swim?'

'Romeo Tango Four-Zero, this is North Pole Control. The situation is over Perth - Scotland, not Perth - Australia! Get yourself out of there and proceed with all haste on a bearing north-west. Control to Romeo Tango Two-Zero, sorry there's been a misunderstanding. Backup is on its way.'

'This is Romeo Tango Two-Zero. I copy, but you'd better be quick - the drivers of Sierra Charlie Niner-Niner and One-Two-Three are squaring up for a fight here. I can't control it much longer...'

'Understood, Romeo Tango Two-Zero'

'North Pole Control, this is Charlie Papa Eight. We are in control of one-three-five in Aberdeen: all boys back inside and in beds. All presents recovered. Sierra Charlie Niner-Niner-Zero is back on schedule.'

'North Pole Control, this is Sierra Charlie Eight-Four-Three, we have a twenty mile tail-back over Amsterdam. Request assistance...'

