

**A RADIO CHRISTMAS SAMPLER, Vol. V**

Holiday Radio Stories, 2025

Written and produced by

John F. Barber

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)

Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-NoDerivs 4.0  
International

©2025 Re-Imagined Radio. All rights reserved (except  
those granted by the Creative Commons license)

Re-Imagined Radio  
Season 13, Episode 12

Final draft

## **A RADIO CHRISTMAS SAMPLER, VOL. V**

Holiday radio stories, 2025

Re-Imagined Radio  
Season 13, Episode 12  
Final Draft

Premier broadcast: December 15, 2025

Written, Produced, Hosted by John F. Barber

Post production, original music, sound design by Marc Rose

Graphics by Holly Slocum with Evan Leyden

Social Media and Announcing by Rylan Eisenhauer

### **Synopsis**

Re-Imagined Radio's fifth volume of radio holiday stories. This sampler includes a Christmas wartime message from Edward R. Murrow who encourages us to keep hope alive, samples from "A Christmas Party for Hubert Smith" where radio connects a wounded Navy sailor in California with his family and hometown in Tennessee, and "The Plot To Overthrow Christmas" by Norman Corwin, told in rhyming verse.

### **Credits**

"Christmas Message to America, December 24, 1942." CBS News, Edward R. Murrow.

"A Christmas Party for Hubert Smith." *Truth or Consequences*, Dec. 20, 1947.

"The Plot To Overthrow Christmas." Columbia Workshop, Dec. 24, 1945. Written and directed by Norman Corwin.

### **Color Code**

**Yellow highlighted text** = sound effect(s), either pre-recorded or live.

~~**Magenta highlighted text with strike through**~~ = text deleted for episode timing

**MUSIC** = pre-recorded

**MUSIC** = bespoke, created for this episode

COLD OPEN

SFX: EDWARD R. MURROW, "CHRISTMAS  
MESSAGE TO AMERICA, DECEMBER 24,  
1942"

MURROW

This is London. And this is the fourth Christmas Eve. The Beef Eaters may have become spam-eaters, but no one has seen Scrooge about tonight. Our men have been giving parties for British children. They have made toys of odd bits of wood and metal. Big tough sergeants have played Santa Claus. Thousands of British children, and especially the orphans and the poor, have had a memorable time thanks to the Americans. Our men are the best-fed, best-paid, and best-uniformed soldiers in this war. And this could mean they have certainly maintained the American tradition of good-natured generosity. Some of them are a little homesick, but you couldn't tell it by looking at them. I've asked many of them what they'd like to say if they were talking to America tonight, and most of them have said, "Well, you see, it's a little tough to know what to say, but you know how it is." I have an idea that most of them will tell you, don't worry too much, we're all right, and we're amongst friends. And some of them on this dark night might repeat the words written a long time ago. "Though there be darkness, it shall be as the morning, and thou shalt be secure, because there is hope."

THEME AND ANNOUNCER

MUSIC: RIR THEME

ANNOUNCER

Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program about sound-based storytelling. With each episode we explore how dialogue, sound effects, and music can engage your listening imagination and promote storytelling. Here to tell you about THIS episode is John Barber, producer and host.

HOST OPEN

HOST

Thank you Rylan. Hello everyone. Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio. This episode is "A Radio Christmas Sampler, Vol. 5." It's part of our holiday series.

This is the fifth year we have offered a holiday sampler. This time the theme is "Hope," and we have three radio stories I hope you will find interesting.

We began, as you just heard, with Edward R. Murrow, and his "Message of Hope to America, Christmas Eve, 1942."

Broadcasting via shortwave radio from London, Murrow, as always, is a reliable commentator of what he sees and hears.

Please listen to our episode "Proximity Effect," which considers Murrow's radio reporting of the London Blitz during World War II. It's available on our website, reimagedradio.fm, or our YouTube channel, [at sign] reimagedradio.

Next, we'll listen to samples from "A Christmas Party for Hubert Smith," an episode of the very popular program *Truth or Consequences*.

Then, we'll listen to "The Plot To Overthrow Christmas," a radio drama written in verse, broadcast by *Columbia Workshop*, Christmas Eve, 1945.

For more information, and the episode script, visit our website, [reimaginedradio dot fm](http://reimaginedradio.com).

Thank you for listening as Re-Imagined Radio presents "A Radio Christmas Sampler, Vol. 5."

**MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION**

ACT #1, "CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR HUBERT SMITH"

HOST

The next sample comes from the radio program *Truth or Consequences*. Created by Ralph Edwards, it opened on four CBS stations March 23, 1940. Soon, it was carried by stations nationwide, the greatest success story of the 1940 radio season.

Sponsored by Procter & Gamble, makers of Duz dish soap, *Truth or Consequences* quickly established itself as the most sensational of all radio quiz shows then available.

Episodes combined elements of slapstick and lunacy, in a quiz show format.

Contestants were asked questions.  
Incorrect answers resulted in outlandish  
"consequences."

In this sample, from the December 20,  
1947 episode, Edwards directs a  
transcontinental radio and telephone  
hook up between Tennessee and  
California, to provide a hopeful  
Christmas for a wounded war veteran. And  
facilitate radio storytelling. Let's  
listen to "A Christmas Party for Hubert  
Smith."

SFX: SAMPLES FROM "A CHRISTMAS  
PARTY FOR HUBERT SMITH," DECEMBER  
20, 1947, TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES.

ANNOUNCER-ARLO  
WILCOX

Hello there. We've been waiting for you.  
It's time to play Truth or Consequences.  
Yes, Truth or Consequences, the show  
that does everything on the air. Brought  
you to by Duz, the soap that does  
everything in your wash. And here he is,  
the fellow whose show was again voted  
number one, Audience Participation Show  
in the annual awards made by newspapers  
and radio editors, columnists and  
critics conducted by Motion Picture  
Daily in behalf of *Fame Magazine*, and  
next to Bing [Cosby] was voted number  
two, Master of Ceremonies. No. But with  
us, he's just that Duzzy guy, Ralph  
"Truth or Consequences" Edwards.

RALPH EDWARDS

Well, thank you very much, Arlo Wilcox,  
and greetings, party players. I  
certainly want to thank the radio

editors and critics for voting *Truth or Consequences* number one again.

Remember, last week, we asked you to write your Christmas wish for the world to "Merry Christmas, Box 400, Radio City Station, New York 20, New York 20." York.

We told you, you weren't going to get anything for your trouble. No prize, nothing.

Well, so far, about 42,000 people, you too I hope, have taken the trouble to do something for nothing. That's a mighty good-sized crowd, and the thing they've done is mighty good-sized too.

By their wishes and by their numbers, they have proved something pretty important. People are pretty swell people. They want a lot of good things for themselves, but they want a lot of good things for other folks too. Love, faith, friendship.

We haven't finished counting the letters yet, and we haven't sorted the different wishes. But next Saturday, we hope to be able to tell you on *Truth or Consequences* what the top ten wishes are.

Meanwhile, the Christmas wish to the world idea is growing by leaps and bounds. On Christmas Day, seven daytime radio programs are going to devote their

~~entire programs to dramatizing some of  
the wishes you sent in.~~

~~Now, let's see Arlo, where's that list  
of programs? Oh, here it is. Big Sister,  
Ma Perkins, Young Dr. Malone, The  
Guiding Light, Life Can Be Beautiful,  
Pepper Young's Family, and The Right to  
Happiness.~~

~~Now, you've still got time to send in  
your Christmas wish to the world. Just  
answer this question. If you had the  
power, what would you give the world for  
Christmas?~~

~~Keep your answer short. One word if  
possible. Send your answer to Merry  
Christmas, Box 400, Radio City Station,  
New York 20, New York. Not later than  
midnight, December 25th, please, so we  
can get 'em all counted and sorted in  
time to give you the results next  
Saturday night.~~

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

RALPH EDWARDS

Yes ... it's here again. For the past  
weeks, you've been going over that gift  
list and maybe most of... of your  
purchases there. But now on the  
threshold of the big week of the year  
with wreathes in the window, holly on  
the door, with a jolly old man with a  
long white whiskers fattening up his  
reindeer for the big trip down, there's  
no denying it, Christmas is here.

SFX: BELLS RINGING

RALPH EDWARDS

And come Thursday morning, the bells will be ringing at all the churches, the kids will be laughing in all the houses, most everyone in his own way will be celebrating the reason for Christmas, the doctrine of peace on earth, goodwill toward men.

And we got to thinking what an ironic thing it is that many of those who helped give peace the real meaning of the word will be doing their celebrating from a bed or a wheelchair. And I wonder if each one of them can know and feel in their heart just how grateful we are.

So fellows in hospitals all over the country, this next consequence is for you. As a matter of fact, you might even be the contestant we have for it.

Here we go to a veterans hospital, and will the fellow whose name I call please say hello back to me, although there may be no microphone in sight, you see.

Hello? Hello? Hubert Smith.

HUBERT SMITH

Hello.

RALPH EDWARDS

Hi, Shipfitter 3rd Class Hubert Smith. This is Ralph Edwards at *Truth or Consequences*. Now, tell our Christmas party listeners what hospital you're in, Hubert.

HUBERT SMITH

Long Beach Naval Hospital.

RALPH EDWARDS Yes, sir. Well, is all the gang around there?

HUBERT SMITH You bet.

RALPH EDWARDS Where's your home, Hubert?

HUBERT SMITH Greenville, Tennessee.

RALPH EDWARDS Yes, where is Greenville, Tennessee?

HUBERT SMITH Well, uh, that's, uh, seventy two miles north of Knoxville.

RALPH EDWARDS Yes, sir. Who all is in your family, Hubert?

HUBERT SMITH Well, there's, uh, just three of us, my mother, father, and myself.

RALPH EDWARDS I see. What do they call you, Hubert, or...?

HUBERT SMITH Well, no, they call me... I go with my initials, H.C.

RALPH EDWARDS H.C., okay. But what's your father's occupation?

HUBERT SMITH Uh, he's the manager of the Greenville bus station.

RALPH EDWARDS I see. What, uh, what, uh, coach company is that?

HUBERT SMITH Uh, Tennessee Coach Company.

RALPH EDWARDS I see. Well, before we go any further, we'd better give you a question, Hubert.

Uh, Al, get me a question from the question bin, will you, please, or Floyd? And then, if you miss it, you must pay the consequences, okay?

HUBERT SMITH Uh, I'll try.

RALPH EDWARDS All right. The gang around there, fellas, we'd better give 'em an easy question, do you think, or a hard one?

CROWD RESPONSE Hard one.

RALPH EDWARDS Let 'em have it, okay. Here, uh, Harold, uh, DeCellis of Aurora, Illinois, wants us to tell him why a lazy husband is like a Model T Ford. Truth or consequences, H.C. H.C. Smith. Hubert Smith.

HUBERT SMITH Uh...

RALPH EDWARDS How about that, H.C.? Why is a lazy husband like a Model T Ford?

HUBERT SMITH Well, uh...

RALPH EDWARDS You got all sorts of time. You got 20 seconds. 18 have gone by, 19, 20. Because they're both shiftless.

HUBERT SMITH Huhh.

RALPH EDWARDS Oh, man. Well, I guess we got him, didn't we, gang? Well, you haven't told the truth, so you must pay the consequence.

Now, your consequence, H.C. Hubert, is to pretend it's the night before Christmas in Greenville, Tennessee, your hometown, just as it's been for all the years you can remember. You're back there with the family and the gang, doing everything you've always done. This is before you ever thought of the word "paralyzed" or "hospital cot."

Okay, hang on. We're really going back to Greenville. This is a preview of Christmas Eve in Greenville, Tennessee, H.C.

I suppose the first thing we'd better look in on is the school party. Didn't the high school usually hold a Christmas party the day before Christmas?

HUBERT SMITH

Yes, They usually did sometime just before Christmas or before we got out on vacation.

RALPH EDWARDS

Ah yeah, alright then, here we go, boy. Alakazoo, alakazam, school party at Greenville High, here we am!

Oh, look who they are, you see? Hey gang, hey everybody, hey, look, listen, everybody, look who's here. Here's Hubert Smith. Old, H.C., he's here for the annual Christmas party.

CROWD VOICES

(GENERAL WALLAH)

RALPH EDWARDS

Oh, how does that sound, Hubert?

HUBERT SMITH Well, I haven't thought about those fellas in a long time.

RALPH EDWARDS Boy, they're glad to see you. Say howdy to them.

HUBERT SMITH Hello, gang.

CROWD VOICES (GENERAL WALLAH)

RALPH EDWARDS They're really there, boy. You'll have to sort of give your names, you fellas there, and girls at school, give your names one at a time Hubert so that we'll recognize you at least HC well just in case any of the guys have gotten fatter and the gals prettier. Go ahead.

WALKER Hello HC, remember me?

HUBERT SMITH Who is it?

WALKER Mary Elizabeth Walker.

RALPH EDWARDS Remember HC?

HUBERT SMITH I sure do.

RALPH EDWARDS Well don't get so anxious boy. All right next.

PARKS Hello Smitty, this is Forest. Remember the explosion in Ms. Roberts chemistry class?

HUBERT SMITH What do you say, Forest?

RALPH EDWARDS Come on.

BOSWELL Hello, H.C. This is Kathleen Boswell.  
Remember me?

HUBERT SMITH Oh, you bet, Kat.

RALPH EDWARDS The whole gang, boy.

LAMB Hi there, H.C. Remember me? Marietta  
Lamb.

HUBERT SMITH Hello, Marietta.

RAMSEY Hi, H.C. This is J.W. Ramsey. How's  
tricks?

HUBERT SMITH Oh, same as always.

RALPH EDWARDS Who's Tricks? Huh. Never mind.

SY RAMSEY Hello H.C. It's Sy Ramsey.

HUBERT SMITH What'ya say Sy.

MAURICE Hey, H.C. It's Maurice. Remember those  
big football games we used to have.

HUBERT SMITH Oh, you bet!

BILL Hello, H.C. This is Bill. Do you  
remember those firecrackers that we used  
to shoot in Study Hall?

RALPH EDWARDS Okay boy. Well, they all seem about the  
same don't they H.C?

HUBERT SMITH They sure do.

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah, any of you get married since  
Hubert saw you last?

AMBROSE Oh, yes, H.C. I'm getting married in the near future. Guess who I am.

HUBERT SMITH Well, that could be Kathleen Ambrose.

AMBROSE Oh, you're exactly right.

RALPH EDWARDS Well, you hit it right on the nose there. Well, who are you going to marry?

Is that a question? Is that, Kathleen, who are you going to marry?

AMBROSE I'm marrying Jack Armitage. You remember him, H.C.?

HUBERT SMITH Oh, no, I think, uh, Cat's, uh, probably been going with some of the fellas since I left.

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah.

HUBERT SMITH She always was a handful, but she's getting around quite a bit.

RALPH EDWARDS Some of the younger crop has crept in, you know. Well, look, kids, uh, uh, we're, uh, going to have to get running on. This magic spell only lasts to the end of *Truth of Consequences* tonight, and Hubert has a million things to do and a million people to talk to, so say goodbye gang, here at the annual school party at Greenville High School.

CROWD Wallah

A.B. GILLEN Hey, Smity. This is your old principal, A.B. Gillen. Remember me.

HUBERT SMITH            You bet.

A.B. GILLEN             We just want you to know we're thinking  
of you all the time. The gang is all and  
with a happy tear in their eyes for you.  
Hurry and get well here Merry Christmas.

HUBERT SMITH            Merry Christmas to you, Mr. Geller.

RALPH EDWARDS         You bet it's Merry Christmas, fella, and  
a town full of friends proving it. But,  
say, we'd better get floatin' over to  
the next place. Let's see, the night  
before Christmas in Greenville,  
Tennessee. What would you be doing,  
H.C.? Oh, my goodness! Is all your  
Christmas shopping done, Hubert?

HUBERT SMITH            No, I haven't thought anything about  
doing any this year.

RALPH EDWARDS         Man, did you get a gift from your best  
girl?

HUBERT SMITH            Well, not yet.

RALPH EDWARDS         What's her name?

HUBERT SMITH            Lila Morrell.

RALPH EDWARDS         Lila Morrell. Do you love her?

HUBERT SMITH            You bet.

RALPH EDWARDS         Any marriage hopefulness there?

HUBERT SMITH            Well I'm gonna think about it seriously  
as soon as I get out of this bed.

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah boy, I knew there'd be some last-minute shopping to do. What do you want to get Lila? How about a nice handkerchief or something like that huh?

HUBERT SMITH Just for her why she rates more than that.

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah but I mean we can get that maybe a handkerchief now, okay?

HUBERT SMITH Well, I'll settle for that I guess.

RALPH EDWARDS All right, well come on before the stores close. Here we're right in front of George R. Lane's store here on Main Street. Let's go in, shall we?

HUBERT SMITH Right.

RALPH EDWARDS Okay boy, come on. We're entering the front door, really, of George R. Lane's in your hometown of Greenville, Tennessee. Alakazam! Now let's get that handkerchief and get on here. Let's see, we're in the store now. Here's a counter where we ought to be able to get a handkerchief. Hello, you recognize this fellow?

PASS Well, Hubert Smith. I'm Ms. Fern Pass. Remember me?

HUBERT SMITH Oh, yes.

PASS Remember my son John? It's wonderful to see you, Hubert. So you want one of these pretty ones? For a girlfriend, I bet.

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah, he wants one of the pretty ones.

PASS What color do you like?

HUBERT SMITH Well, we'll make it white silk.

PASS White.

HUBERT SMITH White silk.

PASS You want something with lace or just plain?

HUBERT SMITH I'll, uh, might as well make it lace.

PASS What size does she wear?

RALPH EDWARDS Now, wait a minute. What size? Isn't this the handkerchief counter?

PASS Oh, my no, this is the lingerie counter.

RALPH EDWARDS Oh, for goodness sake. Give us a pretty handkerchief and let's get out of here, huh? H-C, say goodbye, boy.

HUBERT SMITH Goodbye.

PASS Goodbye, Hubert.

RALPH EDWARDS Yes, sir. Street here. We'll hang on to Lila's present, handkerchief, in case you see her. Here we are. Wonder who's around here on Main Street. Right on Main Street. Who's out on Main Street?

MEYER Hello, Hubert. This is Fuzzy Meyer from the drug store. It's good to see you.

RALPH EDWARDS You remember Fuzzy Meyer... Uh, Herbert?

HUBERT SMITH Oh, you bet. Oh, great to see you, Fuzzy.

MEYER You bet.

RALPH EDWARDS Wait a minute, listen. Hear the church bells? You recognize that sound, Hubert? Those are really the church bells in Greenville, Tennessee. All this is in Greenville. This radio magic is real. Now, come on, let's get up to your church, huh? The Asbury Methodist Church.

MUSIC: ORGAN, IN BACKGROUND, FADES IN, CONTINUES UNDER

RALPH EDWARDS Here we are in the vestibule of the Asbury Methodist Church in Greenville. HC, you still with me, huh? Yeah, we're right here in the vestibule. Let's peek through the door and see who all is here tonight. You recognize any of these people, H.C.? There's Mr. and Mrs. Perry Lamb, you remember?

HUBERT SMITH Oh, I remember all these folks, several of these people.

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah. That a boy, you're playing it right along, and Bobby Phillips, remember him?

HUBERT SMITH Oh, sure, but I haven't seen him in a long time.

RALPH EDWARDS You went in the Navy with him, didn't you.

HUBERT SMITH That's true.

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah. Well, let's go on in, because Reverend Plenor... We'll speak right after the organ stops. Uh, come on, come on in. Here we go.

FRAZIER Hey, H.C., remember me? I'm Catherine Frazier.

RALPH EDWARDS Catherine Frazier.

HUBERT SMITH Oh, hello, Catherine.

RALPH EDWARDS Get you to talk to talk in church like this.

HARRY FORTIN Hey, H.C., Harry Fortin, remember, pal?

HUBERT SMITH You bet

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah. And look over there.

GRANDMOTHER Hello H.C. This is your grandmother.

HUBERT SMITH Hello, Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER Here's Granddad.

GRANDDAD Hello H.C. How are you?

HUBERT SMITH Just fine.

RALPH EDWARDS That a boy.

LYNN BELL Hello, H.C. How are you?

RALPH EDWARDS Who's that?

HUBERT SMITH Oh, that's Lynn Bell.

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah, boy.

LINDA LEWIS My name's Linda Lewis Cray, you remember me?

RALPH EDWARDS Sure he does. I'm sure the Reverend won't mind her talking like this. Quiet, you folks. Reverend M. Guy Plenor is going to speak.

REV. PLENOR I have always thought about and preached about the joy of giving, and how truly more blessed it is to give than to receive. But tonight, I find the genuine reason for joy in receiving, in receiving back into our midst one of our dearest friends, Hubert Smith. And whether it is by radio's merit ... or in our dreams, H.C. has never left our hearts, and in hundreds of churches all over the country, I'm sure all of us preachers, priests, rabbis, and spokesmen of all faiths look down at the seats where you boys used to sit and know in the deep of our hearts that the prayers which went with you into war will bring you back to us again to share the peace that you have made possible. H.C., it's good to have you with us.

MUSIC: ORGAN, "JOY TO THE WORLD"

RALPH EDWARDS Did you hear what Reverend Plenor said H.C.

HUBERT SMITH Sure did Mr. Edwards.

RALPH EDWARDS He meant you and he meant all the fellas listening in hospitals all over the country.

But alakazoo alakazam and look where we are now on this magic trip spending a preview of Christmas Eve in your old hometown. Now you may be in a ward in a veterans hospital in Long Beach, California and I may be here on this stage in Hollywood at NBC, but everything else is in your hometown of Greenville, Tennessee. Everything is real, especially these old pals of yours.

Look, they're over here on North Main Street, all lined up as if they were just waiting for you to join in the Christmas carols.

Hi, gang!

CAROLERS Hi! and general wallah.

HUBERT SMITH We're out here on Main Street. Who are you caroling tonight?

CAROLERS We're in front of Dr. and Mrs. Haskell Fox's home.

RALPH EDWARDS Right in front of us. We'll ask the gang what they're going to sing, H.C., so you can join in.

HUBERT SMITH Well, what are you gonna sing tonight, gang?

BEULEY Hello, H.C. This is Eugenia Beuley, one of your seventh grade teachers out at Doak. One song you used to like best is "Silent Night." Are you ready to lead us in it?

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah. Okay.

HUBERT SMITH I'll try.

RALPH EDWARDS Yes, sir. Here we go, H.C. You start it out, and your friends, 2,000 miles away, will join you in front of Dr. and Mrs. Fox's house there in Greenville. Here we go.

HUBERT SMITH (SINGING)"Silent Night . . ."

CAROLERS (JOIN IN. THEY SING TOGETHER).

MUSIC: ORGAN FADES IN

CAROLERS (END)

RALPH EDWARDS Ah, that was beautiful, H.C. Wasn't it, Carolers?

CAROLERS (WALLAH)

DR. FOX Hello, H.C., this is Dr. Fox. Mrs. Fox joins me in saying, "That was swell! Merry Christmas! Welcome home!"

RALPH EDWARDS Oh my goodness, I'm glad you reminded me, Dr. Fox. Home is right. I promised Hubert's mother and father I'd get him over to see them before the tree was trimmed. Now here we go, right over to your house, H.C. Alakazam! And here we

are. Your folks are expecting us. Let me knock, though, just to warn them.

SFX: KNOCKING ON DOOR

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah. Anxious to talk to Mother and Dad?

HUBERT SMITH Sure am.

RALPH EDWARDS Well, I'll bet they're as excited as you are. How long since you've been home?

HUBERT SMITH It's been several months now. About eight months, in fact.

RALPH EDWARDS Yeah, they're certainly taking their time. Don't seem to answer. Why, look, Hubert, there isn't even a light on. Where do you suppose they are?

HUBERT SMITH Well, they might still be at the station.

RALPH EDWARDS No, they said they would be ... Oh, what's the matter with me? Of course, they're not in Greenville, Tennessee, tonight. Do you know where they are, H.C.?

HUBERT SMITH No, I haven't any idea, Mr. Edwards.

RALPH EDWARDS They're right there, outside the door of your ward, in Long Beach Naval Hospital. Come in, Mother and Dad.

MOTHER AND FATHER Hello, H.C. Hello, Hello H.C. Merry Christmas.

RALPH EDWARDS Are they there, H.C.? I guess they are.

HUBERT SMITH Yes, they're here.

RALPH EDWARDS Well, goodness, there's Mother and Dad. H.C., we sort of pulled a switch on you there at the end. We really have been in Greenville with our microphones all night, meeting your old friends.

But when it came to mom and dad, we threw away the magic stuff and brought on the real thing. Your dad's boss, Mr. Al Kramer, even provided a substitute for both your mother and dad at the Tennessee Coach Company, so they could come along. Are you happy, fella?

HUBERT SMITH I sure am, Mr. Edwards.

RALPH EDWARDS Yes, sir. If you can't go to Christmas Christmas will come to you. Mother, how did he look to you?

MOTHER Oh, he never looked better to me.

RALPH EDWARDS You bet.

RALPH EDWARDS All right, well, I guess you heard H.C. meeting all his friends and doing some late Christmas shopping. By the way, H.C., what did you do with that handkerchief you bought, huh, fella? Huh?

HUBERT SMITH I still have it.

RALPH EDWARDS Well, why don't you, listen, why don't you give it to your fiancée, Lila

Morrell, huh? Because she's right there outside your door too. Come in, Lila!

MORRELL Hello, H.C.

HUBERT SMITH Hello, Lila.

RALPH EDWARDS Is that a surprise, H.C.? Well, our hearts are with you, kids, who've been in love for a long time, and we know this Christmas will be a happy one for you. What do you do back in Greenville, Lila?

MORRELL I'm a telephone operator for the Intermountain Telephone Company. But the number that I want best is H.C.

RALPH EDWARDS Well, you betcha. Mother and father and Lila, this reunion in your and Hubert's happiness, we mean for every veteran in veterans' hospitals all over the country tonight.

MUSIC: ORGAN FADES IN, "FIRST NOEL"

RALPH EDWARDS This is your moment too, fellas, because your parents and wives and children and sweethearts in their minds and hearts are thinking that's me there with you, and that's what your hometown is thinking right now too, boys. Small town, big city, that's what they're thinking. I don't think it's just at Christmastime, either. It's every day. It's just that with all this talk about peace on Earth at Christmastime, we wanted you to know in this special way

that the peace you fought to give us,  
we're gonna fight to keep.

H.C., Mother and Dad, and Lila are here  
as our guests to spend the Christmas  
holidays with you. Uh, we-we have hotel  
reservations for them near the hospital  
there, and since we've pretended this is  
Christmas... Let us give you your  
present.

You've got a swell future, Hubert. The  
courage that has brought you this far is  
the same courage that will see you  
through the future. Here to help that  
future is a \$500 savings bond. Good  
luck. God bless you. Merry Christmas,  
H.C.

HUBERT SMITH Thank you, Mr. Edwards, and a very Merry  
Christmas to you.

RALPH EDWARDS Thank you. Good night. Good night, boy.  
Good night.

HUBERT SMITH Good night, Mr. Edwards.

SFX: APPLAUSE

RALPH EDWARDS Our thanks to engineer DeWitt Shultes  
and *Truth or Consequences* producer Ed  
Bailey in Greenville, Tennessee's church  
and school, to engineer Jim Hackett and  
producer Dick Loughran at Main Street  
and Lane Store, Greenville, to engineer  
Joe Kay and producer Fred Carney at Long  
Beach Naval Hospital and to our studio  
and mixing engineer Johnny Pollock and

producers Al Paschal and Floyd Holm here in Hollywood. To our Truth of Consequences organist Buddy Cole and church organist Ida Ripley in Greenville, Tennessee, and to all of Hubert's many friends in Greenville, Tennessee who were so eager to pay this tribute. To their pal, shipfitter third class Hubert Smith, paralyzed from the neck down in Long Beach Naval Hospital, and all the veterans throughout the grateful thanks to you. This is Ralph Edwards speaking on behalf of our sponsor, the makers of Duz, and wishing you a very Merry Christmas. Good night, everybody.

**MUSIC: FUSEBOX THEME FOR BREAK**

**THE FUSEBOX BREAK**

HOST

This is John Barber. Thank you for listening to Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "A Radio Christmas Sampler, Vol. V."

These are strange and difficult times for a lot of listeners. But hope and inspiration can come from any direction. For example, consider "The Fusebox Show."

Produced by Marc Rose, Milt Kanen, and Jeff Pollard, each episode features unique conversation and commentary about current events and contemporary culture. Here's a sample.

SFX: THE FUSEBOX SHOW TEASER

MUSIC: FUSEBOX THEME, FADE UNDER  
AND OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING

HOST "The Fusebox Show" is also available as podcasts. Learn more at their website, thefuseboxshow dot com.

MUSIC: FUSEBOX THEME, FADE UNDER  
AND OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING

HOST You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "A Radio Christmas Sampler, Vol. 5."

So far, we've listened to a "Christmas Broadcast from London" by Edward R. Murrow and "Hubert Smith's Christmas Party" from *Truth or Consequences*.

HOST Our final sample is "The Plot To Overthrow Christmas," written and directed by Norman Corwin and broadcast by *Columbia Workshop*, Christmas Eve 1945.

All the actors and sound engineers are gathered in the same CBS New York studio. So the experiment is not with remote broadcasting. Rather, it's how the actors speak their lines. They all use rhyming verse, as the bad guys of history all gather in hell and hatch a plot to overthrow Christmas. Enjoy listening to this unusual, but hopeful, example of radio storytelling.

ACT #2, THE PLOT TO OVERTHROW  
CHRISTMAS

SFX: LOUD THUNDER

ANNOUNCER

Seven years ago this Christmas a young radio writer-director named Norman Corwin produced his first half-hour broadcast for CBS. A fantasy entitled "A Plot to Overthrow Christmas." This holiday season, Norman Corwin comes back to the same studio to direct substantially the same cast with which he first presented his now traditional fantasy "The Plot to Overthrow Christmas." As in the original production House Jameson plays Santa. Eric Burroughs is Nero. And Will Geer performs the role of Mephisto. Henry Morgan, better known as "Here's Morgan," is a newcomer to the plot, playing a number of roles including that of your narrator.

SFX: CYMBAL CRASH

ANNOUNCER

Did you hear about the plot to overthrow Christmas?

Well, gather ye now from Maine to the Isthmus

of Panama, and listen to the story

Of the utter inglory

Of some gory goings-on in hell.

Now it happened in Hades,

Ladies

And gentlemen,

It happened down there that the fiends  
held a meeting.

The fiends held a meeting for the  
purpose of defeating ...

Christmas.

With the aid of a fade,

A fade on the radio,

We'll take you there with a hi and hey-  
di-ho!

To hear first hand the brewing of a plot

Down in the deepest stygian grott.

SOTTO VOCE

(CONFIDENTIALLY) "Grott" is a poetical  
term for grotto.

(Whenever you hear my voce sotto

Or sotto voce, whichever you prefer,

It's just I, taking pains to make quite  
sure

That nobody makes a poetical allusion

Which might, in any way, create  
confusion.)

I return you now to the voice you were  
hearing

Before I had to do this interfering.

ANNOUNCER

As I was saying

In this stygian grott

The notables of limbo hatched a plot

And what went on in the sulphurous hole

We'll soon pick up by remote control.

Of course, such a pick-up is not made  
quickly,

As a matter of fact it's rather  
trickily.

You mustn't mind if it sounds erratic

That's merely intra-terrestrial static.

Don't be surprised if you're deafened by  
thunder

Just as we start on our journey under:

You'll hear earthquakes and all of the  
commoner varieties

of natural phenomenon.

And so below,

Via radio, (fading)

To regions where

Legions of the dam-ned go.

SFX: CYMBAL CRASH FOLLOWED  
IMMEDIATELY BY PROLONGED THUNDER  
COMING UNDER AND A THERAMIN-TYPE  
NOISE TO INDICATE DESCENDING. NOISE  
OF RADIO TUNING. THIS FADES OUT AS  
VIOLIN FADES IN.

COURIER (ENTERING AND UNDER THE VIOLIN) Nero!

Do you hear? Nero!

SFX: VIOLIN STOPS

NERO How dare you interrupt me in the middle  
of a movement

of my favorite concerto? You should look  
to the improvement

of your manners.

COURIER Sir, if you please,

my apologies.

I would not have intruded upon your  
recital

If the matter were not so terribly  
vital.

NERO The most important matter in the world  
is piddling

When it comes to be compared to Nero's  
fiddling.

COURIER

Now what you say may be very true

But I've been sent here to summon you

To a great massed meeting of the  
tortured souls

Down in the grott of the flaming coals.

NERO

A meeting? What for? What's the big  
idea?

Why can't a fella have some peace down  
here?

COURIER

Peace, poor soul, can't be found on the  
premises

This is a region abounding in Nemeses.

NERO

Now you're talking like a travel folder.

Tell me, varlet, before I smolder:

Why are we meeting? Who's on the spot?

COURIER

We're meeting in order to fabricate a  
plot.

A plot against the festival that mortal  
men

comfort in, and gladden in, again and  
again.

You see, every year they get together...

NERO (INTERRUPTING) Never mind the facts.

I don't want to hear how mortal man acts.

The only information about which I care concerns the mass meeting and who'll be there.

COURIER His wickedness, Mephisto, will preside.

NERO Naturally.

COURIER And several of the Borgias will be sitting by his side.

And down in front by the sizzling sodium will be many personalities noted for their odium.

Haman, Caligula, Medusa and Legree...

NERO That's all very nice, but what about me?

COURIER Oh, you'll be sitting in row A, center.

'Tween Ivan the Terrible, the tormentor--

And Circe...

NERO Mercy!

Why, they're both deranged!

COURIER Do you wish me to see if your seat can be changed?

NERO Yes, if you will, please.

Taste comes first, even though a soul  
may be

Eternally cursed.

COURIER Right-o! (EXITING) See you at the  
meeting then?

NERO Yes. And now, back to my fiddling,  
again.

SFX: VIOLIN BEGINS, AND CONTINUES  
UNDER...

SOTTO VOCE This is I, the sotto voce person.

It should have been explained that Nero  
is rehearsin'

for nothing in particular.

He's just that way.

While hell's fires burn,

He likes to play.

It makes him feel a little more at home.

It's just an avocation he picked up in  
Rome.

SFX: VIOLIN FADES WHILE...

CAST (VOICES FADE IN, A CROWD, EXPECTANT.  
CONTINUE BRIEFLY, THEN...)

SFX: GAVEL POUNDS SEVERAL TIMES.

CAST (VOICES CONTINUE BRIEFLY AND THEN UNDER FOR...)

MEPHISTO (Over voices) The meeting will now come to order, please.

CAST (Voices fade out as Mephisto continues)'

MEPHISTO I've called you here from over sixty seas of boiling pitch

And blazing phosphorous to stop what constitutes a loss

For us.

We've lost prestige and I greatly deplore

That we stand in danger of losing more

In the way of confidence and spirit.

We're far from our goal; we're nowhere near it.

And this is the reason:

Though we've done well

In carrying forward the work of Hell

We've left a very big job unfinished.

After all these years there is undiminished

Good will on Earth every late December

Because of Christmas.

Now please remember that as long as this  
continues to be

The race of man will not belong to me.

I will listen now to any questions you  
may want to ask;

And then, suggestions.

HAMAN Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman!

MEPHISTO Brother Haman has the floor.

HAMAN You say we've done well in our efforts  
to sell evil.

I say we've done better. We've carried  
out the letter of your law.

And I say as a veteran demon...

IVAN Sit down there, Haman,

Enough of this folly..

HAMAN Sit down yourself,

You're out of your trolley.

IVAN Sit down. I am Ivan, the Terrible.

VOICE You're telling us! Why, you're  
unbearable.

CAST

(LAUGHTER)

SFX: GAVEL POUNDING REPEATEDLY

MEPHISTO

(ABOVE THE NOISE) I want more decorum

In this forum!

These personal remarks you make must  
cease.

Now, brother Ivan, will you speak your  
piece.

IVAN

I merely vant to say,

In a casual vay,

That Haman's a radical,

Always gets fan-yat-ical.

Vhy, you think to hear this pup,

That the devil should judge him up.

HAMAN

Mr. Chairman, brother Ivan is a  
demagogue.

With a brain like a fly and the manners  
of a hog.

Now he says that...

CAST

(LOUD RESPONSE, DROWNING OUT VOICE)

SFX: GAVEL, SEVERAL TIMES

MEPHISTO It comes to this: Are we going to let a little holiday

Like Christmas

Get the better of us all down here below?

CAST (LIKE A COLLEGE CHEER) No! No! No! No!  
No!

MEPHISTO Very well, then sirs, Very well, let's go!

Let's lay down plans now to overthrow this Christmas business

And all that guff of holly and mistletoe and stuff.

CALIGULA Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman!

MEPHISTO Brother Caligula may take the floor.

CALIGULA Mr. Chairman, I abhor,

As a former emperor,

Anything which curbs our rule.

Let us give some presents, too.

Candy sticks and things to chew,

Fruits and nuts and little cakes,

Poisonous as rattlesnakes.

CAST (BRAVO!)

CALIGULA Let our subtlest worker be  
Bichloride of mercury.

CAST Brilliant!

CALIGULA Let us wrap in tinsel bright  
Little gifts of dynamite.

CAST Very good.

CALIGULA Work things, so that men will fear  
Whenever twelve twenty-five draws near.

CAST Good.

CALIGULA Soon, at this rate if you please  
Men will hang from Christmas trees.

CAST (AGREEMENT AND APPLAUSE)

MEPHISTO My dear Caligula permit the chair  
To say you've got something there.  
And now with this fine start,  
Let's hear some more.

MEPHISTO Yes, Brother Nero, do you want the  
floor.

NERO With all due respects to Caligula's  
views

I think there's a better method we can  
use.

I've heard just lately that men are  
giving the razz

To classical music by making it jazz.

They're swinging Bach and what is keener

They're doing the shag to Palestrina.

As a connoisseur of music, of course I  
love

The works of Rimsky-Korsakov.

But today I note, with a bitter shrug,

They've made Sheherazade a jitter-bug.

MEPHISTO

Much as we admire your clever rhyme

Will you get to the point? We're wasting  
time.

NERO

I was just about to say when interrupted

That Christmas can easily be corrupted

If you take and swing all the Christmas  
carols.

Why think of the evil!

Just barrels and barrels

Of sacrilege every time you play

A pious song in profane way.

Why, once you entice them to swing Noel

Then victory belongs to us. Well?

CAST

(AGREEMENT AND APPLAUSE)

LEGREE

Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman!

MEPHISTO

Mr. Legree!

LEGREE

I'd like to say that it seems to me

That you-all is barkin' up a coonless  
tree.

I think Mista Nero has made a wrong  
guess.

The way to go about it is to get in  
Congress

And bribe a bunch of Senators who know  
dere oats

And jes' make a purchase of a block of  
votes.

And den dey can legislate a situation

Where dey rules ol' Christmas right out  
of de nation.

Dey can all get togedder and pass a law

Where dey ain't gonna be no Christmas no  
maw!.

HAMAN I think that Legree's suggestion is a beaut.

IVAN It's very cute.

HAMAN And quite astute.

BORGIA Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman!

MEPHISTO Yes, Miss Borgia.

BORGIA I think we should all give pause  
to think about this Santa Claus.  
He is the man behind the scenes,  
The symbol of what Christmas means.  
If we could rub him out, my friend,  
Our troubles would be at an end.  
Just think how it would tickle us  
To liquidate St. Nicholas.

BORGIA A girl like me could fascinate  
The guy, and then, assassinate!

MEPHISTO Do you think you could do it, pretty  
one?  
Are you sure you wouldn't be by pity  
one?

BORGIA Sometimes you are an awful tease,

My master, Mephistopheles.

Ain't I murdered several dozens?

Poisoned Uncles, Aunts and Cousins?

Don't my work right here in Hades

Make me first among the ladies?

Men of virtue all cuss me

I am sure that you can trust me.

HAMAN

Of that we haven't a particle of doubt,  
Miss Borgia,

I'm sure we all have nothin' but kind  
feelin's Towardja.

But many times a woman spy, alas, adores  
her victims,

Dames make poor ambassadors.

BORGIA

Do you imply that such defects  
are found inherent in my sex?

HAMAN

I do.

BORGIA

Well, listen here old ironsides,  
You're headed for some cyanides.  
You've crossed a Borgia,  
And you know the consequences

That follow.

CAST

(WONDERMENT AT WHAT SHE MEANS.)

SFX: GAVEL POUNDS AS NEXT LINE

BEGINS

MEPHISTO

Come, come disciples. This is very bad.

There's nothing to be gained by getting mad.

Suppose we put the matter to a vote.

All those in favor of the motion made by fiend Caligula, will signify by rising to their feet and saying "Aye"!

CALIGULA

Aye!

MEPHISTO

One vote in favor? Caligula's. And those opposed?

CAST

Opposed!

MEPHISTO

The motion is defeated.

SFX: GAVEL POUNDS ONCE.

MEPHISTO

Up we bring the plan of Brother Nero's; viz.,

To swing the hymns and pious music.

All those for will please respond by raising up a paw.

NERO

For!

MEPHISTO And those against.

CAST Against!

MEPHISTO Very well.

SFX: GAVEL POUNDS ONCE.

MEPHISTO Now, the project of Legree's.

Who is there here who totally agrees?

LEGREE Ah do.

MEPHISTO Legree votes for himself. And those opposed?

CAST Opposed!

MEPHISTO And now all those who favor Borgia's cause,

It being to eliminate Santa Claus.

CAST Aye! Aye! Aye!

MEPHISTO And those opposed?

(SILENCE)

MEPHISTO It seems the women have a way with them,

At least they have carried the day with them.

BORGIA You flatterer.

CAST (LAUGHTER)

SFX: GAVEL POUNDS ONCE.

MEPHISTO                   The motion is carried. And now we will  
decide

Which one of us will take Nick for a  
ride.

We'll all draw lots, and thus settle the  
moot

Point of who'll be sent to execute.

CAST                       (MURMUR OF EXPECTATION, CONTINUE SOFTLY  
UNDER NEXT LINES.)

SOTTO VOCE               This is your old friend, sotto voce,  
  
Visiting down where it's eternal noche.

Noche is Spanish for night, you know.

Merely a reference just to show

That English isn't all I have to go by.

Oh well, I guess I missed my calling.

I should have been a lobbyist.

You see, I'm stalling

To give them time to finish the voting.

Let's see, the weather. Now I'm quoting

*The Daily Hellion*: Continued heat

Both overhead and under feet.

Free and moderate gases blowing

Up to gale force and then going

North, by westerly.

Light showers of brimstone

For the evening hours.

That's what it says here.

I'm not fibbing. Ha-ha.

How am I doing with my ad-libbing?

This is a thing Bob Trout would have fun  
with.

Say, the drawing should soon be done  
with,

We expect the results any moment now

As soon as...

SFX: GAVEL POUNDS.

CAST (DIN SUBSIDES)

MEPHISTO The lots have been drawn

And I'm glad to say

The honor has fallen Nero's way!

CAST (YELLS OF APPROVAL)

MEPHISTO Now, Nero, you are charged with a great task,

It's the vilest deed that we could ask

A fiend to do.

We'll be proud of you.

NERO Now just a moment.

How do I get there?

What do I wear?

NERO Is it dry or wet there?

Is it fact or fancy or just word of mouth

That he lives at the pole ...

Is it North or South?

What should I use when it comes to the showdown

A gun or a dagger? So give me the lowdown.

MEPHISTO Now, Nero, you needn't sound so tragic,

You'll get to earth by the blackest magic.

To create an express elevator

Is simple for an expert spell-creator.

With a lot of pyrotechnic dazzle

We'll let you off on a hill in Basel,

Switzerland.

From there you will make your way to the  
Arctic Circle

Then break your way through ice

with a blowtorch.

After a while, you're bound to reach

Santa's domicile.

And once you get there, ah, my dear Nero

All of our work will have gone for zero

If you don't succeed in your assignment.

**NERO**

I know. If at first we don't succeed

We can try and try again.

But there is no need because nothing  
will come of it

Meaning no offense, do you mind if I  
take my departure hence?

**SFX: GONG**

**SOTTO VOCE**

That, my friends, was a big brass gong.

It's used in this story right along

To indicate that we're about to travel

To points where the plot will further unravel.

And now, if Ambassador Nero elects

We'll have another spot of sound effects.

SFX: STRANGE, SCI-FI KIND OF SOUND BLENDING A MACHINE AND WIND AND THERAMIN-TYPE NOISES. PLAYS FOR 20 SECONDS AND THEN GIVES WAY TO A CRASH, FOLLOWED BY WIND ONLY UNDER THE FOLLOWING--

NERO Tell me, stranger, is this Basel, Switzerland

Or is it already Donner and Blitzerland?

STRANGER 1 (CORRECTING) Donner and Blitzenland's 5000 miles away.

NERO Thank you mister, and good day!

SFX: GONG. WIND CONTINUES.

NERO Tell me stranger, I've been walking inland for weeks. Where am I now?

STRANGER 2 (SCANDINAVIAN ACCENT) In Finland.

SFX: GONG. WIND CONTINUES.

NERO Tell me stranger, because I've lost stock, where am I now?

STRANGER 3 (RUSSIAN ACCENT) In Vladivostok.

SFX: GONG. WIND CONTINUES.

NERO Listen stranger, after all these centuries of blistering heat

Now I have to suffer from freezing feet.

I'm wincing with pain from this pesky toe...

STRANGER 4 (ACCENT OF SOME KIND) No spik English. Eskimo.

SFX: GONG. WIND CONTINUE.

NERO I declare by my phrenetic soul

I must be over the magnetic pole.

My watch has stopped..

Can that be right?

I wonder...

(Whispering) Ah ... a light

a light!

(Regular voice) In a moment now

You'll hear me knock on Santa's door,

And he'll unlock it, nevermore to lock again.

(EVIL LAUGH)

SFX: KNOCK ON DOOR. WIND CONTINUES.

SANTA (FROM WAY INSIDE HOUSE) Coming!

NERO So is doom! (LAUGHS)

SFX: DOOR OPENS. WIND CONTINUES.

SANTA How do you do, sir.

NERO Very well, indeed. And you sir?

SANTA Splendidly. Won't you come right in?

SFX: DOOR CLOSES. WIND STOPS.

SANTA Take your coat off. I see your chin

Is frozen;

Also your hands and knees.

Sit down while I get you some anti-freeze.

NERO Don't bother sir, I will not be long,

I'm about to perpetrate a fearful wrong.

In short, I am going to do away with...

SANTA (Interrupting) Take it easy.

Do not play with that gun.

I know all about you.

NERO Really?

SANTA

Haven't I had my agent's scout you for weeks?

You've come all this way to abolish Christmas

Now let me say...

NERO

Listen, Santa, I'm no callow stripling,

I've read Ernest Hemingway and Kipling.

And also "The Shooting of Dan McGrew,"

And plenty of detective stories, too.

And just to show you what broad guy I am

I've also read the Rubiyat of Omar Khayam.

Do you think that a fellow with his reading so graded

Could have learned so little as to be dissuaded

From the main objective?

Why, don't make me giggle.

SANTA

I'd feel a lot better if you didn't wiggle

That gun so.

Much as I'm impressed with your education

I honestly believe that a figure of your station

Should have given more thought to the ways of man

And less devotion to the cult of Pan.

NERO

By others, no doubt, your wisdom may be prized

But I didn't come here to be criticized.

In fact, I came to dispatch a duty

So don't hand me any of this tutti-frutti.

If you have any last words you want to say

Then spill 'em. I haven't got all day.

SANTA

What's the rush? Unless I've counted wrong

The polar day is always six-months long.

NERO

Well, after I've disposed of you I've got to hurry

Right back to hell, or they'll begin to worry.

SANTA

Not about you, but about your career in homicide.

Do you think the mere loss of you would make them hysterical?

Their only interest is numerical.

NERO

Think so?

SANTA

Mephisto wants to rule just as much of  
humanity

As possible, for reasons of personal  
vanity.

NERO

By the Styx! You're right! To think that  
he'd dare!...

Are there any ladies here? Will you  
permit me to swear?

SANTA

My answer to that is an emphatic no!

There are several lady dolls in the toy  
room below.

NERO

Oh, Claudius. Oh, Cassius. Oh,  
Naphthalene.

What a fool I've been. What a fool I've  
been!

But wait, I think I see what you're  
after,

You're as clever as a big time Roman  
grafter.

You remind me now of my royalty

Just to get me in a mood for disloyalty.

Do you think I could be that meanly  
deceptive

to Satan? Why, Santa, I'm keenly  
perceptive.

I can see right through all your clever  
ruses

Nero can be plenty foxy when he chooses.

I'll have you know that I'm partly a  
dreamer,

Partly a wit and partly a schemer.

I'm part philosophical and also part  
mystic...

SANTA I suppose you fancy that you're highly  
artistic.

NERO Fancy? Why I have such a sense of  
beauty...

SANTA Don't hand me a helping of tutti-frutti.

Any creature who really had beauty in  
his soul

Would appreciate Christmas. He would  
know that the whole

Idea of the holiday was one of such  
power

That all the fiends below would gnash  
their fangs and glower

Yet, never in a million years could do it  
harm

Because it has a glory, a greatness, a  
charm

You would know nothing about.

NERO

That so?

SANTA

The spirit that it venerates,

The good cheer that it generates

Are things far, far beyond you.

For all your wealth, no man on earth  
could sell ye these.

NERO

Am I so cursed as that? Will you tell  
me, please,

What beauties there may be that I have  
never seen?

SANTA

Have you ever seen

A Christmas tree, tall and green,

Smelling of woodlands,

Covered with a sheen

Of silveriness?

It's branches bending low

With the fruits of human kindness

Instead of snow?

NERO

No.

SANTA

Have you ever closely witnessed

What takes place any Christmas

Morning on a young child's face?

Or perceived any beauties

Purer than the joys

Distilled in the hearts of little girls  
and boys?

Have you ever watched a fire in a  
fireplace

On a Christmas Eve,

Or listened to grace

At a table heavy with fruits and cakes

And all the wonders that a kitchen  
makes?

Fowls and pastries, wines and meats,

And Nuts and raisins and candied sweets?

Have you ever seen mistletoe hanging  
from a ceiling?

In frosty air heard a far bell pealing?

Have you ever come back from a sleigh  
ride tingling

And your feet keeping time with the  
sleigh bells' jingling?

Have you ever seen the beauty of a sprig  
of holly,

Or felt for a moment how it feels to be  
jolly?

NERO

(AMAZED) Golly!

SANTA

Have you ever known how exceedingly  
pleasant

It is to unwrap a Christmas present?

Did you ever know how much cheer it  
lends

To be wished a Merry Christmas by all  
your friends?

Did you ever experience the fun of  
giving,

Do you know at all the joys of living?

NERO

(CONTRITE) I guess I don't.

For all of me I never knew such things  
could be.

Just think how long in ignorance I've  
slept.

SANTA

It must have been the company you kept.

NERO

I was a wicked tyrant once, you know.

SANTA

Ah, yes, but that was centuries ago.

You really had no real way of knowing.,

NERO

Perhaps.

I guess that I'll be going.

I really should be getting on my way.

SANTA

But do you have to?

Don't you want to stay?

NERO

You see, I'm just a bit...

SANTA

Embarrassed?

NERO

Why, yes sir.

SANTA

Now, don't look so harassed.

I know why it is you came

And who it was that sent you.

But that's all done with.

I take it you repent you

Of all your past mistakes.

NERO

With many pains and aches

Of conscience.

SANTA

Then you are welcome here.

Please, take your hat off.

Your coat, your muffler also.

Take your spat off.

What happened to the other one?

No matter.

You're pretty thin. You'll presently be

Fatter.

I serve good food here,

I'll get you a platter

Of steak and mushrooms. Medium or rare?

I'll bet that you're hungry as a bear.

Now just sit down. That's it.

Right over here and tell me,

Will you have some wine or beer?

I never touch the stuff myself

But I manage to keep on hand

A little rye for purposes medicinal.

I mean, your chin should be unfrozen,

What a state it's in.

NERO

A while ago you asked me if understood

Good cheer.

I do so now, St. Nicholas,

I see it standing here.

I want to ask you something, sir,

Now please, don't give a yelp.

Is there any sort of work to do

Where I can be of help?

SANTA

Indeed there is. Indeed there is.

And I'm glad you asked me.

I have so many toys to make this year

The job's got past me.

But first, you sit and eat this bowl.

I've got a little trifle I'd like for  
you to see.

So will you sit right down here

And stifle

Your curiosity.

(WALKING AWAY) I'll get it for you right  
away,

It's down the hall a piece.

NERO

Well, who'd ever think it,

Will wonders never cease?

At last, after all these centuries,

I'm so happy I could buzz.

It shows you what a lot

A little Christmas Spirit does.

As Emperor I envied oft

The cheerfulness of peasants.

And now...

SANTA

(APPROACHING) Well, here it is, now,

Nero, my boy.

By way of Christmas presents

I offer you this little gift.

NERO

But Santa, for what reason?

SANTA

A very good one, sir. To whit:

Compliments of the season!

Well, go ahead, and open it.

Why stand there so, reflecting?

NERO

I'm just collecting

Thoughts, St. Nick,

My thoughts I'm just collecting.

Just think how far a tiny bit of  
fellowship

Will carry us.

Oh well!

SFX: PACKAGE BEING UNWRAPPED.

NERO I say!

SANTA Hmm?

NERO What's this? What's this?

It is a Stradivarius!

Why, thank you! Thanks a million times.

I don't know what to say to you.

I'll tell you what I'll do, St. Nick,

I'll start right in and play for you.

I'll play, I'll play, I'll play, I'll  
play, I'll play

All night and day

For you.

SANTA Fine. Now here's some music.

I'm sure you'll play it well.

It's a little piece entitled,

Noel, Noel.

MUSIC: VIOLIN PLAYING THE FIRST  
NOEL. CONTINUES UNDER NEXT PART.

SOTTO VOCE

This is I. Remember me?

Your Sotto Voce friend?

I've just come back

To tell you that

This story is at an end.

MUSIC: VIOLIN, LONG FADE OUT

ANNOUNCER

You have been listening to "The Plot To Overthrow Christmas" written, directed, and produced by Norman Corwin. House Jameson appeared as Santa Claus. Eric Burroughs as Nero, and Henry Morgan as the Narrator, Legree, and Ivan The Terrible. Others in the cast were Anne Shepherd, Kermit Murdock, Will Geer, Robert Dryden, Norman Ober, and Edward Cullen. Paul Winters was Nero's playing arm. The script of "The Plot To Overthrow Christmas" is found in the book *Thirteen by Corwin*.

MUSIC: RIR THEME FOR BREAK

HOST

You've just listened to "The Plot To Overthrow Christmas," part of "A Radio Christmas Sampler, Vol. V," an episode of Re-Imagined Radio.

This is Re-Imagined Radio. A program about radio storytelling. Each episode explores how voice, music, and sound effects can engage your listening imagination and promote storytelling.

RIR TEASER

HOST More information is available at our website, reimagined radio [dot] FM

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, DUCK UNDER AND CONTINUE**

HOST CREDITS

HOST Re-Imagined Radio is produced in collaboration with The Electronic Literature Lab at Washington State University Vancouver.

Our programs are broadcast and streamed by partner community radio stations KXRW-FM (Vancouver, Washington), KXRY-FM (Portland, Oregon), and KNOM-AM (Nome, Alaska).

THANKS to Marc Rose for sound design, and post-production.

Holly Slocum and Evan Leyden for graphic designs.

Rylan Eisenhauer for announcing and YouTube strategies.

Caitlyn Kruger-Lesperance for social media strategies.

FOLLOW Re-Imagined Radio on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X, Blue Sky, LinkedIn ... and our YouTube channel ... [at sign] reimaginedradio.

VISIT our website, reimagedradio DOT FM, for scripts and information about our episodes.

SUBSCRIBE to the Re-Imagined Radio podcast and never miss an episode.

Re-Imagined Radio acknowledges the debt we owe to previous and contemporary radio artists and we hope our curation and stewardship of their artifacts and efforts demonstrates our sincerity.

I'm John Barber, producer and host. Thank you for listening.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, THEN DUCK  
UNDER THE FOLLOWING

ANNOUNCER CLOSE

ANNOUNCER

This is a production of Re-Imagined Radio. To learn more, visit our website, reimagedradio (all one word, no punctuation) DOT fm.

Please join us for another episode of Re-Imagined Radio as we continue our exploration of sound-based storytelling.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, AND TO END.