

Fred Allen - Santa Claus Sits Down

This excerpt from the December 20, 1942 half-hour episode is mostly a skit
(The skit originally aired during Allen's one-hour "Town Hall" show on December 22, 1937).

Cast (6F9M):

Portland Hoffa (Allen)
Fred Allen
Wellington (Anncr)
Falstaff (2 lines)
Male 1
Male 2
Little Girl (1 line)
Buddy (boy)
Mrs. Claus
Nero
Roman Woman
Josephine
Napoleon
(Paul) Revere
Mrs. Revere
Radio Man (Runyon character)

SFX

Wind
Door knocks
Door open/close
Sleigh bells
Lighter wheel scrape
Police Whistle
Thumps (Santa @ chimney)
Body hits
Gun shots
Clock strikes

MUSIC (1): Horn honking

Portland: (yelling) Mr. Allen...

Fred: Quiet, Portland. A voice like yours should be rationed.

Wellington: It's Texaco time, with the Texaco Workshop Players, Al Goodman and his orchestra and starring Fred Allen!

MUSIC (2): Harp and Theme ("Anchors Away") (Fade under and out)

Wellington: This is Jimmy Wellington saying hello for you neighborhood Texaco dealer and inviting you to be his guest tonight at the Texaco Star Theater. It's his way of telling you that you're welcome... welcome to all the skilled help he can give, to make your tires and car last longer. Make your tires last longer by giving them a regular Texaco checkup on pressure and conditions. It's in good hands when you trust it to the care of your Texaco dealer.

MUSIC (3): (Fade back in) Theme to conclusion

AUDIENCE: Applause

Wellington: This week, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Jeffers, the Rubber Director, is asking all citizens to pick up nails and broken glass in the streets to save tires. We now bring you a man Mr. Jeffers can't save... He was born a flat tire, and here he is, Fred Allen!

AUDIENCE: Applause

Fred: Thank-you. Thank-you and you notice when I bend over the difference between ah, uh when i bend over and a Hollywood comedian... when I go (briefly bends over, away from mic) like that... the Hollywood comedian's hair comes off. Ya see here... Thank-you and good evening ladies and gentlemen... Say, Jimmy, that is an excellent... that is an excellent idea ya know of Mr. Jeffers, asking people to pick up glass and nails from the streets like that...

Wellington: Why yes, Fred, if people will pick up nails in the street there'll fewer punctures and motorists can conserve their tires.

Fred: Well that's nice, Jimmy. Yeah, I read that the Streets Department here in New York is experimenting with a big magnet. They have this magnet and they drag it down the street and the magnet picks up the loose nickels.

Wellington: Well, how's the magnet working out Fred?

Fred: Well, it's a little too strong, Jimmy. The first time they dragged the magnet down Broadway, it yanked the badges off twenty traffic cops, it dragged the Flatiron building two blocks farther uptown, and when the magnet passed the Stock Exchange it pulled US Steel down seven points! Ya see, the thing is...

Portland: (interrupting) Mr. Allen...

Fred: Well, Portland!

AUDIENCE: Applause

Portland: Mr. Allen, I hope you like the Christmas gift I got for you. [14:22]

Fred: Oh, Portland. You sho... A gift?

Portland: Yes. I was in Cartier's yesterday.

Fred: Cartier's! Why Cartier's is the most exclusive jewelry shop on Fifth Avenue.

Portland: That's the place!

Fred: Well I hope they gave you good service.

Portland: They sure did! Mr. Cartier himself told me how to get to Woolworth's!

Fred: Oh fine! Ya know I did so much shopping at Woolworth's this Christmas they're calling me Mr. Five by Ten, now.... Tell me, what is... what is your mother doing for Christmas?

Portland: Well, on account of the silk stocking shortage...

Fred: Yeah...

Portland: ...mama's hanging up her slacks over the fireplace.

Fred: (nasally) Oh fine! Swell...

Portland: Do you think Santa'll fill mama's slacks?

Fred: Not like you mother does.... Go away, go away, you bother me. I have to make a special announcement.

Portland: About our guest?

Fred: No, tonight we're going to do our Christmas sketch, Portland.

Portland: The one you do every Christmas?

Fred: That's right, and I have to make an announcement here... Ladies and Gentlemen, since radio at this season, each year, prevails upon Lionel Barrymore to revive Dickens *Christmas Carol*, the Texaco Workshop players curtsy to tradition and wake up their cast to repeat a Christmas fable they first presented yules ago. Now tonight, Santa shows his claws in a modern tale, called Santa Claus Refuses to Mediate or Jingle Bells Shall Not Ring Tonight. Overture, maestro.

MUSIC (4): Jingle Bells (fade under:) Chimes

Falstaff: This is station NGNG. Good evening friends. The makers of Jum-Balls, the giant moth balls guaranteed to trap near-sighted moths, brings you the exciting quiz program *Take It, or We Will!*

MUSIC (5): Sting

Falstaff: (fast) We interrupt this exciting quiz program *Take It or We Will* to bring you a special announcement from the Assassinated News Service.

Male 1: (stern, newscast-style) Special Announcement: Santa Claus will not ride this Christmas! In a terse bulletin issued from his North Pole igloo today, Santa says, quote, I am on a sit-down strike. I refuse to ride this Christmas, unquote. Rumors flood the country! A report from Miami, Florida, says:

Male 2: (southern drawl) Two-hundred families live an auto camp stop building chimneys on their trailers. Do not expect Santa Claus.

Male 1: (very fast) At Rutland, Vermont, a little girl says:

Little Girl: I wrote Santa Claus a letter and got no answer. He ain't comin'. (sobs)

Male 1: At Detroit, Michigan, a labor official says:

Male 2: (gruff) Santa Claus better ride, or the Teamsters Union 'ill pull out every reindeer from here to Nome, Alaska.

Male 1: At New York City, 200,000 children hold mass meeting. Tiny spokesman says:

Buddy: (loudly) Santa Claus can't let us down! 200,000 of my consu-ants have appointed me their spokesman. I'm off to see Santa Claus now... Bill, my scooter!

MUSIC (6): Slide whistle swoops up, then: Jingle Bells (fades down as wind starts)

SFX: Wind (cross fades up with Music, then quickly:) Five door knocks, door opens, wind fades up loud...

Mrs. Claus: Well... Come in...

SFX: ...door closes and wind stops. [wind starts and stops within 5 sec]

Mrs. Claus: ...little boy. What are you doin' way up here at the North Pole?

Buddy: Brrr... Is this Santa Claus's igloo?

Mrs. Claus: Yes, sonny, I'm Mrs. Claus. Who are you?

Buddy: (excitedly) I'm Buddy Jones.

Mrs. Claus: Are ya lost, son?

Buddy: No. I'm here to see why Santa refuses to ride this year.

Mrs. Claus: I'm glad you come, son. I been arguin' with the old foggy [?] all week and he refuses ta budge.

Buddy: Where is Santa Claus now, Mrs. Claus?

Mrs. Claus: He's in the next room, there, sulkin'.

Buddy: Can I see Santa?

Mrs. Claus: Won't do ya no good, son, but I'll get 'im for ya.

SFX: Door opens

Mrs. Claus: Here's Santa...

Fred: There ain't no use in coaxin', Ma, I ain't a-goin'.

Mrs. Claus: Come on out, stupid, ya got company.

Fred: Yeah? Company? Who?

Buddy: I'm Buddy Jones, Santa Claus...

Fred: (overlapping) Well, don't mean nothin' to me, small fry.

Buddy: Is this awful rumor true, Santa Claus?

Fred: Yip. I ain't ridin,' son.

Buddy: But this is Christmas eve, Santa. Trees are lighted. Millions of trusting children have hung up their stockings. The world is waiting for you.

Fred: Well, the world can wait. Now I ain't a-ridin'.

Buddy: But Santa...

Mrs. Claus: Ain't no use, nipper. He's stubborn.

Fred: I ain't not neither stubborn, Ma Claus. I'm just sick of bein' Santa Claus. The world don't appreciate nothin.' Squabblin,' threatenin,' strikin,' warrin'...

Buddy: But ya just can't quit, Santa. You must have a reason.

Fred: I got plenty-a reasons, Spr out.

Buddy: As spokesman for 200,000 kiddies, I demand a statement.

Fred: Well, what is it you wanta know, shaver?

Buddy: Well, why won't you ride tonight, Santa Claus?

Fred: Well, son, I'll tell ya. Sit down here on my lap.

MUSIC (7): Jingle Bells

Fred: Son, I been Santa Clausin' it ever since the world began. For nineteen hundred and forty-two years, I bin bringing people presents every Christmas, tryin' to spread joy. My intentions has been good, but my reward has been nothin' but heartaches and misery. The first trouble I had, was way back in ancient Rome. It was Christmas eve in the Court of Nero. The Emperor was playin' a violin concerto.

Music (8): bad violin playing

Crowd: (overlapping) Ohhh! Boooo! Bah!

Nero: Zounds, lackeys! You dare to give Nero the pheasant?

Crowd: (at same time, several crowd members:) Heeey..Yeah we want.. We want the hocking's trimmings... (gradually louder:) Ohhh, waaaay! Your majesty is corneous. (Crowd rumbles continue under following)

Nero: Corneous? You rebels scoff at my pizzicato?

Woman: Your music'll never get Rome hearteous!

Crowd: (under Nero:) Yeah Heeey Yaaaa Yaaaah

Nero: You tarts! Begone hypocrites!

SFX: Door slams shut (crowd noise ends) Sleigh bells start at [X]

Nero: Nero can't get hearteous! [X] Cold swine! I'll show them!

SFX: Thump (Santa @ chimney). Sleigh bells continue under following

Fred: Ha-ha-ha-ha- [Y] ha-ha-ha-ha

Nero: (start at [Y]) What gives? What tumbles out of my chimney?

Fred: (loud, but off) Merrrry Christmas, Nero, Merrrry Christmas! (sleigh bells end)

Nero: Who art thou, lumpkin, the chimney sweep?

Fred: (coming on) I'm Santa Claus, Nero, bearin' Christmas gifts for your majesty.

Nero: Ultimus nausea. What is it, another basket of figs, from the Rome Stage Door Canteen?

Fred: My gift is a trinket rare, Nero... so rare, it hasn't even been invented, yet. Here.

Nero: Gramercy, now! What is this tiny golden box?

Fred: It's a cigarette lighter, Nero. Turrn that little wheel.

SFX: Scraping of lighter thumb wheel.

Fred: Merrry Christmas, Merrry Christmas, Nero!

Nero: It flames!! (sinisterly) Romans scoff at Nero, Nero will have his revenge. Ha ha ha....

Fred: (overlapping) Watch that lighter, Nero! Yer settin' fire to them draperies...

Nero: (yelling) I can't make Rome hot with my music huh? I'll make Rome hot another way! Revenge! Revenge! Haaa! Haaa!

Fred: (overlapping) Look out, Nero! Fire! Fire! Fire!

MUSIC (9): (starts at last "Fire!") Jingle Bells up and out

Fred: So, ya see, son, if it weren't for Santa Claus, Rome wouldn't a-burned.

Buddy: Gosh! That was too bad, Santa.

Fred: See, there I was, tryin' to spread good cheer... and what'd I get? The first hot foot in history.

Buddy: But that was 2000 years ago, Santa Claus and you shouldn't hold a grudge that long.

Fred: Well Nero was just prolog to ma troubles, son. A few centuries later I set out to bring a present to Napoleon and Josephine. I'll never forget that Christmas, son. Josephine was a sittin' on a chaisey davenport. Napoleon opened the door...

SFX: Door opens

Napoleon: Josie, my petite!

Josephine: (sudden breath in) Nappieeee!

Napoleon: (overlapping) Voila! I am detour on my way to Waterloo, especially, mon, to say au revoir!

Josephine: Mon lover, mon Nappy Wappy...

Napoleon: One minute and your nappy is away. Ah! C'est la guerre!

Josephine: Ahhh, Nappy, I will be faithful!

Napoleon: Yeaah. Such a man who dares to stay close to my Josephine, I will kill him!

Josephine: Aack (as if hit while fencing)

Napoleon: Touche!

Josephine: Ma petite, Josephine has no other boyfriends. Nappy you swear...

Napoleon: Bien, mon big beefy wife, Jo!

Josephine: I have a farewell present for you, Nappy. I will leave settee when we see ya...

SFX: Door closes at [U], Police whistle at [V] and [W]:

Napoleon: Ahh... Bien! Bien! [U] (sing-song) Mademoiselle from [V] any place, parlez-vous.

SFX: 4 thumps (as Santa comes down chimney)

Fred: (start loud after first thump, then gradually softer)
Oh-ho-ho-ho-ho-ho [X] -ho-ho

Napoleon: (start at [X]) Heyyyy! Who goes there? Who is coming through [W] the fireplace?

Fred: (loudly) Merrrry Christmas, Napoleon!

Napoleon: Sacrebleu! You've come to woo my Josephine, Gigolo!

Fred: Hold on! Put down that truncheon...

SFX: Body hits at [X], [Y] and [Z]:

Napoleon: Voila, cousine! Take this! [X] And this! [Y] And this! [Z]

Fred: (overlapping, as he is hit) Ohh! Ohh! Ohhh! Let me out! (going off)
Help! Help! help!

Napoleon: (overlaps, laughs) Hahaha! Yea! Bien! [Q] Heh, heh!

SFX: Door opens at [Q]

Josephine: Ooo la,la! Your little Josephine returns, Nappy!

Napoleon: Would you miss us all, my sly pussycat?

Josephine: Oui, I forgot, it is Christmas Eve... What can be keeping Santa Claus?

Napoleon: Santa.... Mon Dieu! You are expecting the... chap... in the red suit?

Josephine: Oui, Nappy! You don't think Santa Claus will come?

Napoleon: Not tonight Josephine!

MUSIC (10): Jingle Bells

Fred: Yes, son. Napoleon gime a concussion that Christmas. Runnin' out of the castle, I fell into a moat, my ermine got wet and come to life. My collar and one cuff got away.

Buddy: But you can't stay mad for awhile because years ago one crazy Frenchman locked you up, Santa Claus!

Fred: Well things has happened, since, son. Another Christmas, I got a raw deal in a suburb of England. It was called the American Colonies. I dropped in at the house of some jockey called Paul Revere. The cottage had no chimney, so I looked in at the window. Mrs. Revere was preparing a Christmas turkey. Paul, come gimpin' into the room.

SFX: Door closes

Revere: (gruff) Christmas dinner ready, Effie?

Mrs. Revere: Yes, Paul. Pull up a chair.

Revere: No, no. Set my plate on the mantle-piece.

Mrs. Revere: Can't you set down, yet, Paul Revere? That ride was last April!

Revere: Well, every Middlesex village and farm ain't once around Central Park, Effie!

Mrs. Revere: Well, you ought ta try and set down for Christmas, Paul. It'd be a nice Christmas present for your spine.

SFX: 7 rapid knocks at door

Revere: Who's that?

Mrs. Revere: Might be a British spy, Paul...

Revere: (loud) Hand me ma gun, Effie!

SFX: 8 rapid knocks at door

Revere: Who's there? Whig or Tory?

Fred: (off, through the door) Merry Christmas, Paul Revere! It's me, Santa Claus.

Revere: So what?

Fred: I've got your Christmas present, Paul. It's a cushion, stuffed with fuzz from Delaware peaches.

Revere: Gosh. For me to set on?

Fred: You bet!

Mrs. Revere: Don't let 'im in!

Revere: I ain't sat down for eight months, Effie; it sounds mighty temptin'.

Mrs. Revere: It might be some enemy trick, Paul.

Fred: I'm Santa Claus, honest injun, Mrs. Revere! (pleading) Open up!

Revere: I got ma gun, Effie, I'll open the door a crack.

SFX: Door opens

Fred: (fully on and loud) Merry [x] Christmas!

Mrs. Revere: (starting at [X]) I told you Paul! Look at that shoe...

Revere: A Red Coat! Take this!

SFX: Gun shots at [X] and [Y]

Fred: [X] Oh! [Y] Oh!

MUSIC (11): Jingle Bells

Fred: Ya see, son, the world's given old Santa plenty a trouble.

Buddy: Sure done ya dirt, but nobody'd dare abuse Santa Claus, today!

Fred: (Fred, and only Fred, says "Radio" with a short "a" throughout) Well that's where you're wrong, son. Only last week I was pre-viewin' a visit in a place called New York. I flyin' over some buildin'... I think they call it Radio City. Well, I come down the air conditionin' into some office. I was just gunna wish the man a Merry Christmas when he yells..

Radio Man: Well, what do you want, Whiskers?

Fred: Well, I'm Santa Claus.

Radio Man: We ain't auditionin' today.

Fred: I ain't tryin' to get into Radio, I'm a mythical character.

Radio Man: Bein' a friend of Duffy of Duffy's Tavern won't help ya. Now pick up that bag and beat it!

Fred: Well, you've heard of Santa Claus, ain't ya?

Radio Man: Well yeah, but you're a has-been, Santa Claus.

Fred: A has-been?

Radio Man: Radio's doin' everything you used to do and doin' it better.

Fred: But I fly through the air...

Radio Man: So does radio.

Frd: I come down chimneys.

Radio Man: Radio comes down the antennas.

Fred: I give things away...

Radio Man: For how many box-tops?

Fred: I give things away for nothin'

Radio Man: Well so does radio..

Fred: (softly, almost sinister) Radio does, ayyy?

Radio Man: Doctor IQ gives away vitamins.

Frd: Yeah?

Radio Man: Take It or Leave It gives away pencils.

Fred: Yeah?

Radio Man: Quiz Kids gives away information. Truth or Consequences gives away soap.

Fred: Now hold on, son. There's one thing I been spreadin' for nineteen hundred and forty-two years, but radio hain't givin' away...

Radio Man: Oh yeah? What's that?

Fred: Santa Claus is givin' good will...

Radio Man: Radio is givin' away sixty minutes of that stuff on a program every week.

Fred: What program?

Radio Man: The Good Will Hour! [Mr. Anthony answered questions from 1936 to 1953]

MUSIC (12): Jingle Bells

Fred: Well... I was thrown out of Radio City. Folks don't need Santa Claus no more. Radio's given 'em everything.

Buddy: Gee, Santa. You certainly had a lot of trouble.

Fred: And that's why I my spirit's broken, son. Bein' Santa Claus is just a pain in one century after the another. I'm givin' the world back to Rand and McNally. I'm through.

Buddy: Please don't say that Santa. Have pity on us kids. We'll have no toys.

Fred: Santa ain't a movin', son. This is one Christmas I'm gunna enjoy in peace.

SFX: Clock strikes midnight

Fred: (after second strike) What's that clock strikin'?

Buddy: It's twelve o'clock.

Fred: It's midnight, ayy? Well...

Buddy: It's Christmas Day, Santa Claus...

Fred: Yeah, don't mean nothin' to me. I'm takin' it easy; I'm sittin' right here.

Buddy: (sorrowful) Won't you change your mind, Santa?

Fred: I ain't gettin' kicked around again this Christmas.

Buddy: Please, Santa Claus, please! (cries)

Fred: Aw shucks... Hush your cryin' son! Hey Maw!

Mrs. Claus: (off) Yeah, Santa...

Fred: Where's ma mittens, ma bag, ma reindeer, my sleigh?

Mrs. Claus: Santa, you ain't...

Fred: Yip, I'm a-goin', ma!

Buddy: (brightly) Honest, Santa Claus?

Fred: Yip. I changed my mind, son.

Buddy: Thank-you, Santa!

Fred: Christmas ain't Christmas with out Santa Claus. I'm givin' the world one more chance.

Buddy: Can I have a statement for all the kiddies, Santa?

Fred: You bet you can, sonny. Just say it's Merry Christmas, Hi-yo Donder!
Hi-yo Vixen! Merrrry.....

MUSIC (13): Jungle Bells to conclusion then White Christmas under:

Fred: Well, that takes care of tonight's installment ladies and gentlemen. Next week our guest will be Dennis Day, star of the Mary Livingston program.... This is Fred Allen ladies and gentlemen and since this is our last show before Christmas, all of us here in the texaco Star Theater and all of our Texaco dealers from coast to coast, wish you a Merry Christmas. Good night...

MUSIC (14): Curtain, under:

Wellington: This is the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Original Air Time for this excerpt: ~17 min

(Full episode, with several musical numbers and jokes, was 28:30)