

Elf Frank Myrrh: Greetings and welcome to another joint edition of the North Pole Podcast and the Santa Trackers Podcast. I'm Elf Frank Myrrh of North Pole Radio News and I'm joined by Elf Crash Murphy, my radio partner as well as your International Director of Santa Trackers. Elf Bernard was in North Pole Chat and his comments caught the attention of a lot of our tracker elves out there. Crash, I'm told you were following along with that chat, why didn't you say anything?

Elf Crash Murphy: Yes, I was there, Frank. But honestly getting Elf Bernard into chat is really rare and I didn't want to distract from what he was saying. We only get about 30 minutes in those chats and he was on a roll.

Elf Frank: Well, I wanted to talk to you about Elf Bernard a little bit with that stuff. I mean, why is he so hesitant to chat? Why doesn't the workshop have a public relations team that we can talk to? There is a lot of interest in what the workshop does.

Elf Crash: Well, there is a lot of interest in the workshop right now because they are in the spotlight and certainly under the gun. But I would tell you during most years the workshop is kind of boring, Frank. They do one thing. We get questions now and then about the workshop but you and I can answer those pretty easy. A guy that's as busy as Bernard doesn't need to be the public face of the workshop just because he runs that department.

Elf Frank: I get that. But Elf Bernard seems to be one of shyest elves I know when it comes to sharing news. I just don't understand why.

Elf Crash: You've known Elf Bernard for many years, Frank. You know him on a personal level, as a friend. And he's great. But he's got another side to him, kind of like Elf Victor in the Reindeer Operations Department. These are big, important elves. Very close to Santa. For these men it is such a part of their identity to do their job well because Santa really needs them to. So a guy like Elf Bernard that's job #1 – Santa. Not getting on the radio or even doing North Pole Chats.

Elf Frank: I do know Elf Bernard on a personal level. He's an exceptional person. And you're right, he's a serious elf absolutely devoted to the cause of Santa. But I know a lot of elves that way who talk to me as a news guy at the North Pole. You're like that. Elf Ernest is like that. Elf Hugo is like that. You guys will engage with us and be totally open and patient with our questions. Elf Bernard...well, not so much. I know he likes me. He treats me well. But when I have to put on my elf hat as a newsman and talk to him with his elf hat on as the Workshop guy, well, there's serious hesitation there.

Elf Crash: Let me tell you something. Elf Bernard has some good reasons for why he is the way that he is and it kinda showed up in that chat yesterday, Frank. Years ago, before you started, Elf Bernard was more open with the media, both here at the North Pole and around the world. But soon those movies started coming out and in particular, that Disney movie called The Santa Claus, in which the character at the North Pole who ran the workshop is also called Elf Bernard.

Elf Frank: I'm aware the real Elf Bernard doesn't like that character in that movie. But it's NOT him, Crash.

Elf Crash: It doesn't matter. People think it is him. Look what happened in the chat. While the discussion is going on with Elf Bernard a chatter went to Google to look up Elf Bernard and he came up with this screen shot claiming that Elf Bernard is the head of all the elves at the North Pole. You did a great job in that chat, Frank, and those elves, those tracker elves who were present in the chat like they always are, did their level best to straighten that dude out. But the guy thought, because it was Google, that it carried some authority. Now, you know that's wrong because you work at the North Pole. But what if you're Elf Bernard, how would you feel?

Elf Frank: I am not sure, Crash. Honestly, I have no idea what Elf Bernard – the real elf Bernard – goes through because of that.

Elf Crash: Well, I'll tell you what he goes through, Frank. It's humiliating. And it's constant. Look, that movie has become a classic and it's easy to see why. It's a good movie, as far as Christmas movies go. But for Elf Bernard, it's a horrible, awful movie, because it doesn't depict the North Pole as it really is. He knows it's just a story. But he gets real letters from real children who think the real Elf Bernard is like the character in that movie. And he hates that character. He hates how rude he is. He hates how he yells at elves in the movie. He cannot stand how the guy dresses. And he gets mail about that stuff all the time.

Elf Frank: So you're saying the real Elf Bernard has to account for the stuff the movie Elf Bernard does?

Elf Crash: Yes, and it's not just that one movie, Frank. It's several of those movies. He gets hate mail from parents who think he is rude. He gets love mail from girls who want to marry him and think he's cute.

Elf Frank: You're kidding me.

Elf Crash: No, and guess what? That movie is more than 30 years old now. Can you imagine putting up with this nonsense year after year, Frank? To me, it's no wonder the real Elf Bernard keeps himself away from the media and from you, Frank, no offense to you. The guy just wants to be left alone to do his very best for Santa. We should be applauding Elf Bernard. We should be telling the world what he really is. He's a gentleman. He's a warrior in the cause of Christmas. He's kind, he's well mannered, he's knowledgeable and he's decent to everyone. The elves in the workshop absolutely are devoted to him and would walk through fire to do things he needs them to do. Everyone at the North Pole, every elf helping out in Santa's workshop right now, has the utmost respect for Elf Bernard because they know the real Elf Bernard. Many feel sad for him because of the way the movie Elf Bernard is. The real Elf Bernard can't do anything about that but he bears that burden all the time. Your North Pole Chat yesterday kind of proved it.

Elf Frank: Holy smokes, Crash. I knew some of that but I didn't know it was that bad.

Elf Crash: It is that bad. I know Elf Bernard and Santa has talked about this a lot. If there's anyone who knows what the real Elf Bernard is going through, it's Santa. Santa doesn't care for the way he is portrayed in a lot of movies and television shows and commercials either. He has it way worse than Elf Bernard.

Elf Frank: Santa seems to weather that stuff pretty well.

Elf Crash: I think it's part of his job, Frank. But I'm not sure it's part of ours, you know? You get mail and comments because you're always on the radio. You and I are not high profile like Santa and Elf Bernard, but we get some public exposure and sometimes things are said I know we both don't appreciate or feel good about.

Elf Frank: Yes, I get it. But you're right, I'll never be where Santa and Elf Bernard are now unless they come out with a really weird movie.

Elf Crash: Can you imagine how they would portray us in a movie?

Elf Frank: Two grumpy old men?

Elf Crash: More like Dumb and Dumber, Frank.

Elf Frank: Too true. What can we do to help Elf Bernard? I don't suppose he will come on a podcast or on the radio to talk about this stuff?

Elf Crash: There's zero chance of that. Elf Bernard doesn't only have a problem with that movie, Frank, but he doesn't believe any elf should be known all that well outside of Santa. He thinks we need to keep things about Santa and no one else.

Elf Frank: There's some wisdom in that.

Elf Crash: Elf Bernard is hardly ever wrong, Frank. That's one thing I really appreciate him. The man is all truth and all smart. He spits fire when it comes to truth and in a year like this one where the pressure is really on for the workshop, well, Elf Bernard is doing heroic work. The real Elf Bernard.

Elf Frank: Well, Elf Bernard had some things in that chat to say about your world of Tracking Santa for Santa, Crash. And I wanted to see what you thought about it.

Elf Crash: Well, we sit in a lot of the same meetings, Frank. And you know what I'm noticing? Since the reindeer returned to the North Pole last week, after a month of going all over the world to get the supplies for the workshop to get toys made, there's a shift going.

Elf Frank: A shift? What do you mean?

Elf Crash: Look, we're in the pre-delivery phase of Operation Merry Christmas right now and that's a time where the news seems to be all about the workshop or getting ready for Christmas. Then, right after Thanksgiving, every year, there you are on the radio announcing that we're in the delivery phase of Operation Merry Christmas.

Elf Frank: That's right, we do that every year, for sure.

Elf Crash: Why does the delivery phase kick off the day after Thanksgiving, Frank? Santa won't deliver for nearly a month but we say the delivery phases kicks off in November – every year. Why?

Elf Frank: I don't know. I don't think I've even wondered about it. I thought it was just tradition. So....why DO we start the delivery phase if Santa's delivery doesn't even begin until very late on December 23rd?

Elf Crash: I will tell you why. It's because there is a lot more to the delivery phase than Santa jumping in his sleigh, Frank. It takes, as you know, months and weeks and days of preparation and millions of elves and thousands of reindeer and who knows how many sleigh. We go through all kinds of tracker reports from around the world, we try as trackers to get a look at every house, every roof, every chimney. We report the weather. We report on Christmas readiness in every area. We send in pictures. We have elf supervisors, regional

tracking centers and a huge news department with legions of radio reporters all providing round the clock news – the delivery phase is about a lot more than Santa. You tell that story every single year without fail. And Elf Bernard let a big cat out of the bag yesterday.

Elf Frank: He did? What did he say?

Elf Crash: He said the story you're gonna tell is going to be different this year. He put my tracker elves on notice, Frank. I'm getting messages from a lot of them because they are starting to notice the elf supervisors are kind of being quiet. Why are they being quiet? Because it's going to be different this year tracking Santa for Santa.

Elf Frank: Okay. How is it going to be different?

Elf Crash: I have no idea.

Elf Frank: Wait minute – you can't give us a build up like that and not explain it, Crash. You're the Director of International Santa Trackers. If anyone should know how it's going to be different it should be you.

Elf Crash: I'm just saying what Elf Bernard is saying, Frank. He didn't give specifics. But he can see the clouds gathering and he knows what's coming is going to be different than what we have known in years past.

Elf Frank: Okay, but we cannot predict that without giving some particulars in how it will be different, Crash. Tracker elves, especially, need to know. But Believers need to know too – I mean, the question was asked by someone yesterday if they shouldn't be asking for certain things of Santa this year because of the crisis in Santa's workshop. So everyone knows this year is going to be different. But we're getting close now, Crash. They want to know and understand more. They don't have the benefit of being in all those planning meetings that you and Elf Bernard are in. They're trying to picture it. But they really have very little information.

Elf Crash: Okay, fair enough. But if you and I are to go there, Frank, you have to understand, and every tracker elf has to understand, and every believer has to understand that the what ifs we're talking about are just that – they may happen, they may not. That alone is what makes this year and the delivery phase of Operation Merry Christmas so different. There's just too many what ifs.

Elf Frank: What ifs? What does that mean?

Elf Crash: Well, what if Santa's workshop gets to December 23rd and they are still two week behind?

Elf Frank: I don't even know, Crash.

Elf Crash: Yeah, well, now you know why Elf Bernard wasn't specific and why I'm being so cagey with you. There's no way we can really know where things will be by the time Santa is scheduled to launch. And yet everyone wants to know, what's going to happen? What's going to happen?

Elf Frank: If you guys – meaning the directors and the department heads and Santa – are talking about what ifs then you have to at least be putting down some ideas on paper.

Elf Crash: Yes, we are. Straight up. But I can't talk about a lot of those.

Elf Frank: Why not?

Elf Crash: Because they will build expectations. And this is a time to avoid doing that. We've got to under promise and over deliver, Frank. We can't be making commitments we can't keep.

Elf Frank: I understand that. But play along with me even a little bit. Tell me just one crazy detail you guys have just talked about.

Elf Crash: Okay, you've seen the lists come out of elves from different departments working in Santa's workshop to help out?

Elf Frank: Yes, I reported that news myself.

Elf Crash: Right. What if those elves aren't enough to make up the shortfall? What if Santa decides to bring in even more elves or even the tooth fairies, which hasn't been done in years.

Elf Frank: So what about that? What would adding more elves in the weeks ahead be different than adding the elves they added a few weeks ago.

Elf Crash: What if they were tracker elves?

Elf Frank: Wait- wut? Are you saying you would put tracker elves – remote working tracker elves – in Santa's workshop?

Elf Crash: We've talked about it, yes.

Elf Frank: Get out of town.

Elf Crash: I am serious. We have shuttle sleighs. We can get them up here. Plenty of reindeer would line up to run those sleighs. We can pick them up like an Uber.

Elf Frank; That would be...that would be insane, Crash.

Elf Crash: Yeah, I don't think it's going to happen. But, we're talking about it. If Santa wanted to, he could make it happen. You know it, I know it and now they know it. And it is this kind of talk that makes it easy, so very easy, to say that tracking Santa for Santa is going to be different this year.

Elf Frank: Wow. My mind's blown, Crash.

Elf Crash: Well, get your head together, Frank. We don't have time for nonsense this year. We don't know for sure what is going to happen. We just need every elf to be ready for anything to happen. That's what Elf Bernard was saying in the chat yesterday.

Elf Frank: The real Elf Bernard.

Elf Crash: That's right. The real Elf Bernard. Genuine, humble, hard working, very real Elf Bernard.

Elf Frank: Crash, you've dropped some truth bombs here today. Are you ready for what this might unleash in the tracker elf community?

Elf Crash: Better truth bombs than the stuff of movies, Frank.

Elf Frank: You're so right. Okay, Crash. The next six weeks ought to be pretty interesting. I hope we get time to do another podcast before Christmas. Thanks for this great episode. Folks, if you're not tracking Santa for Santa yet, please head on over to SantaTrackers.net to sign up and to start your elf career. Santa needs you this year, Christmas needs all of us as elves. On behalf of Elf Crash Murphy, I'm Elf Frank Myrrh thanking you for listening to the North Pole Podcast. We'll see you on the radio.