



Transcript – Recapping Santa’s Ride – Episode 33

Elf Frank: Greetings and welcome to yet another joint episode of the North Pole Podcast and the Santa Trackers Podcast. I’m Elf Frank Myrrh of North Pole Radio News. Our episode this time around is a review of all that transpired with Santa’s latest ride around the world and the efforts of Operation Merry Christmas 2025. Joining me is the International Director of Santa Trackers and the man who followed Santa on Christmas Eve and reported the news on Kringle Radio with me, Elf Crash Murphy. Crash, have you caught up on your rest after the frenzy that was tracking Santa last year?

Elf Crash: Yeah, I’m good, Frank. And actually, the frenzy wasn’t about tracking Santa this year – that all seemed to go smoothly. It was the madness at the North Pole that was out of control. Don’t you think?

Elf Frank: I do. We learned during Christmas in July last year about the trouble in Santa’s workshop and while we didn’t report on it extensively on North Pole Radio News, that whole situation was much worse than the world knew.

Elf Crash: It was. Santa wanted to error on the side of positivity, so to speak. He figured that we had time to work the problem and I think North Pole Radio News was very good at letting the world know what was going on as the season went on but very few knew the story of how desperate things were even way back in July.

Elf Frank: Looking back now, I have to wonder if that wasn’t a mistake, Crash. Why couldn’t we have said more about how much trouble Operation Merry Christmas was in?

Elf Crash: Well, I think there was some pride there on the part of a lot of elves maybe a little bit. Operation Merry Christmas is of interest to the world, that’s why we have a news department, Frank. But at the end of the day Operation Merry Christmas is our problem at the North Pole.

Elf Frank: But don’t you think that if Santa was in trouble the world would rise up to help him solve just about any problem?

Elf Crash: Yes, I do think that. And if we’re being honest we had a lot of offers from people all over the world who contacted Santa privately and via the North Pole State Department to offer assistance. We had companies who were quick to give ideas and suggestions and even to offer resources such as supplies and stock and warehouses and trains and boats and ships and trucks and even all manner of people to help. Santa turned most of those down.



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Elf Frank: Does he talk about that Crash? Was there ever any kind of discussion about having the North Pole take up some of those offers of help?

Elf Crash: There was but Santa is always careful with that.

Elf Frank: Do you know why that hesitation is there?

Elf Crash: I don’t think it is hesitation, Frank. I think it is just the mixing of two worlds he doesn’t want to mix. Think about it. A country raises a flag, a company works behind a brand. Santa doesn’t want to compromise his charity by attaching himself to a flag or a brand. Santa is largely anonymous. He’s not promoting or selling anything and he doesn’t want to ever be obligated to do so. It’s not that these people were insincere in their offers of help but even the suggestion of obligation or deals or anything like that Santa wants to avoid. Can you imagine a sleigh flying around with a FedEx logo on it?

Elf Frank: Yes, that would not be good. Did FedEx actually offer to do something in exchange for branding on a sleigh?

Elf Crash: No, and I want to make sure I say that clearly. I was just giving a dumb example. They offered to help Santa in any way they could and they never asked for a thing. Others did, but Santa doesn’t even want to be in that position. Besides, the crisis in Santa’s workshop was caused in part by some of the very people offering to help.

Elf Frank: What? What do you mean by that?

Elf Crash: Well, the North Pole Logistics Department has to source materials from all over the world to supply Santa’s workshop with what they need to make toys. Everything from glue to little plastic wheels and rubber balls and all the stuff that is needed to make toys has to come from somewhere, Frank. Santa gets that stuff from companies. He pays for it. They make money on what they sell to the North Pole. And due to various problems some of those companies could not supply things last year like they have in the past. It happens sometimes. All business goes in cycles and it affects other businesses and last year all that stuff just affected us at the North Pole. I’m not blaming anyone. Santa’s not mad at anyone. We just had a hard time last year doing our jobs because a lot of suppliers let us down.

Elf Frank: How do we avoid this kind of thing in the future?

Elf Crash: This isn’t anything new. The North Pole has to adjust all the time and last year we didn’t adjust well. Santa ultimately takes responsibility for it. That’s his message to elves as



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he meets with them now in that the fault lies with us and we have to see things better, anticipate better, and plan better to keep things like this from happening.

Elf Frank: So, how do you see things happening for this year?

Elf Crash: I know Elf Bernard pretty well and what everyone didn’t see was how upset he was about this entire situation. To his credit he saw it as a problem last year at this time and he was creating a fuss about it early on. He was the only one who was, Frank. I think he’s got every elf foot to the fire this year and I don’t think we’re going to see a repeat in 2026.

Elf Frank: Santa must have had some sort of vision with this thing too, Crash. He was stubborn about not launching from the North Pole late and about what he wanted delivered where and when.

Elf Crash: He sure was, Frank. If Santa had not been so insistent I don’t think it would have been the great Christmas it was for the world. Do you know how close Santa came to a new speed record this past year? I don’t think people know how impossible that was.

Elf Frank: Give us an idea of what the North Pole was like those last three or four days before Christmas and even while Santa was early on in his flight.

Elf Crash: It was insane, Frank. We all gave up a lot of our Christmas. We didn’t get to do a lot of our traditional Christmas at the North Pole this year. The Sunday before Christmas devotional that Santa holds every year? It didn’t happen. The Elf Choir concert didn’t happen. The sub-for-Santa in some places around the world didn’t happen. The Christmas Eve party at the Claus residence didn’t happen. Elves were working around the clock seven days a week, skipping all their family and personal events of Christmas they enjoy every year. Elves had to get outside of themselves and do stuff they didn’t really know how to do.

Elf Frank: But what were they feeling as all that happened?

Elf Crash: They were happy to do it, Frank. Look, we’re elves. We take an oath. We live by a code. We want to celebrate Christmas like anyone else does, for sure, but at the end of the day it’s not about us and our Christmas. It’s about others, Frank. I kind of hope we can change the message with what happened last year. It wasn’t really about a crisis in Santa’s workshop. It was about focusing on others. That’s the bigger and the better message.

Elf Frank: Do you think we as a news department did enough to convey that message?

Elf Crash: No, but how could we really do that while it was happening? That’s our job NOW, Frank, not when it was going on. Our job was just to report what was happening and we did



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that pretty well. In listening back to the radio show now I think the news was excellent. It was focused, it was fast paced. It was different than in the past, sure, but it was what was happening. We didn’t have time to pontificate on it all, to give opinions and to point out nuanced things. We do that NOW. I think the news was just right. What kind of response came in from listeners, Frank?

Elf Frank: Oh, we had a lot of worried believers out there, Crash. It really concerned me and we had some behind the scenes discussions about stuff we were reporting.

Elf Crash: Oh really? When?

Elf Frank: We did a report when you were in Sector 1 about the weather at the North Pole and how it was affecting Operation Airlift and how things were looking very uncertain for Sectors 4 and 5. We got a flood of emails and phone calls from parents telling us that their kids were afraid Santa wasn’t coming.

Elf Crash: So did it change the news coming out later?

Elf Frank: No, we didn’t change anything. But we talked about it. We had our flight analysts, Elf Harvey Bullet and Elf Wilbur Boeing, in a meeting to say that they needed to be very certain what they were saying before they said it.

Elf Crash: But those guys are tasked with giving us their opinions. They’re experts, Frank. I think well of both of them. They aren’t always right but they are always relevant.

Elf Frank: I’m not criticizing them, Crash. I’m just saying we were on the spot to deliver news that wasn’t always positive. And that stressed some people out.

Elf Crash: That’s the news business, Frank. Think about it. Santa’s flight was flawless but what if something happened that caused big delays and Santa couldn’t deliver until late on Christmas Day? That’s never happened but what if it did? Are we serving people by not telling them what’s happening?

Elf Frank: No, of course not. It was just strange to have a Christmas Eve when there was so little room for error and such a great possibility for delays. It didn’t happen and we’re all happy about that. But I’ll just say that some believers out there were not the only ones to get stressed.

Elf Crash: Are you saying your anxiety got the best of you, Frank?



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Elf Frank: Not quite, but I was worried for much of that time before Santa took off. What about you? What was different in following Santa this year?

Elf Crash: It was smooth as butter this year, Frank.

Elf Frank: What do you mean?

Elf Crash: Well, Santa was super focused. Nothing ruffled him. I heard Flight Command in my ear and they were a steady stream of bad news, Frank. And Santa didn’t even blink. I mean he didn’t miss a thing. He adjusted, he gave instant direction. He just seemed to know just what to do and what he wanted and he went out and he did it. He left with his foot on the gas and he never let up. We hit some weather here and there like we usually do. We ran into some late Christmas Eve celebrations like we usually do. But honestly, from the front line following Santa, I can’t remember a flight that was more smooth and efficient, Frank. If it weren’t for the stuff I was hearing in my earphones I would have thought this was a good year, not a rough one.

Elf Frank: Wow, that....kind of upsets me, Crash.

Elf Crash: Why, Frank?

Elf Frank: Well, you know that feeling you get when you lean back in a chair too far and you’re just about to fall back and you catch yourself at the last minute?

Elf Crash: Yeah.

Elf Frank: I felt like that the whole time you and Santa were in the air.

Elf Crash: You did? Why?

Elf Frank: Because I didn’t know when or where the good news was going to come, that things were going to turn out okay.

Elf Crash: Well, did that point ever come? And if it did, when did you know it?

Elf Frank: It came when I least expected it. It was just before you and Santa got to Japan, Crash. And it wasn’t anything that came in the news or from a tracker elf or one of the elf supervisors or even from Flight Command.

Elf Crash: What was it then?

Elf Frank: It was from the mail, Crash. We were getting updates from the North Pole Post Office about stocking mail and what believers were saying. Around that point the messages



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kind of changed from “Gee, I put this thing on my wish list for Santa” to “C’mon, Santa, we know you can do it!” or “We believe in you Santa!” and messages like that. It turned at that point and all the way along from then on that’s all we heard were messages of just encouragement and love and belief.

Elf Crash: Did that make it back to the radio audience?

Elf Frank: Oh we talked about that a lot in the newsroom, Crash. And looking back on it now, I’d say yes. The Santa sightings we got, the elf new reports that came in – it all took on a new tone from that point forward.

Elf Crash: Has Santa been made aware of all this?

Elf Frank: Elf Ed Zachary and Elf Ernest would have to tell that to you, Crash. I’m not certain. Do you know what Santa was feeling about the messaging coming in while he was in flight?

Elf Crash: Ya know, I think he did, Frank. I can recall being over the South Pacific – Fiji or somewhere, I don’t know – and Santa made a comment about making happy customers.

Elf Frank: Why did he say that?

Elf Crash: Well, we had been to Samoa and I think some of the islands around Tonga and there was a little girl there – I don’t recall her name, but she’s about 7 years old, a big believer – and she was just worried sick about Santa coming to her house, Frank. She was worried about there being room for Santa to land and whether her dog would be nice. And all her little concerns just got to Santa a little bit and he got to her house and he told me he left her a little note thanking her for her concerns and wishing her a Merry Christmas. Now, Santa enjoys all his visits but he especially enjoys those visits like that don’t focus on gifts or cookies or anything material – you know, just concern for another person. Santa made sure she had a Merry Christmas, that’s what he’s there for, but to him the note he left her was of more importance. And as we went along Santa seemed to be focusing on that kind of thing.

Elf Frank: Is there a different feeling in one part of the world versus another?

Elf Crash: Well, yeah, there is but it’s not so much about the place or even the people in different areas. What Santa is feeling about his schedule can affect it too.

Elf Frank: What do you mean?



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Elf Crash: Well, Sector 1 is unique not only because of their great summer weather when we are there but it’s all islands and oceans, Frank. Fewer people in smaller places. Santa goes through Sector 1 really fast and then he gets to Sector 2, which is a totally different vibe.

Elf Frank: What makes Sector 2 a different vibe?

Elf Crash: Well, there are huge populations of people in places like China and India. Billions of people, Frank, but not quite so many believers. Santa doesn’t go to every house and there’s a complicated and mighty effort that goes into the behind the scenes work to make sure Santa gets to the right places. Santa doesn’t want to go to a home where he’s not invited, Frank. Some people just don’t know about Santa or some people just don’t believe. Santa doesn’t go to those places not because it doesn’t want to but because he doesn’t want to bother any one. Sector 2 unlike any other areas has more unbelievers than believers and it’s physically the biggest sector on the map and those two things combine for making it a slower part of the trip. It feels that way to me every year.

Elf Frank: How does that differ then with Sector 3?

Elf Crash: Sector 3 is the start of the looney tunes train, Frank. It’s just the opposite. Again, billions of people but crammed into a much smaller place. Santa kicks it up a hundred speed and everything moves so much faster, Frank. And just when we think it cannot get crazier, we cross the Atlantic and turn it up another hundred notches.

Elf Frank: Wow, Crash. What about in the time since you and Santa get home. Have you heard from many believers?

Elf Crash: Yes, Santa gets thank you notes almost immediately. By the time he even gets home on Christmas morning, there’s big stacks of that mail to go through. In my job, I get lots of mail but it’s different than Santa’s of course.

Elf Frank: Do you like that?

Elf Crash: I love that, Frank. There’s this lady in Australia who writes in every year to tell me thank you for the bedtime advisories and getting her boys to bed at a decent hour on Christmas Eve. They are tracking Santa and listening to you on Kringle Radio and they get really excited about it but when the news comes down that Santa tells them to go to bed



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they run for bed like no other night of the year. I enjoy this good lady’s note every year even though I have nothing to do with the bedtime advisories.

Elf Frank: That’s awesome, Crash. Did you have any favorite message that came through this year?

Elf Crash: Yes, a lady from Utah in Sector 5 shared something I thought was really cool. What do you call those people who trace their ancestors?

Elf Frank: Genealogists? Family historians?

Elf Crash: Yes, she’s one of those! She told me about her family history of following Santa on Christmas eve. She shared a list of something her mother made as a child, her list for Santa. I showed that one to Santa, I thought it was so cool and Santa remembered her and that Christmas.

Elf Frank: That’s amazing. I wonder if that’s a thing – of families who remember Christmas and Santa from past generations.

Elf Crash: You bet it is and I love when people share old pictures and stuff of waiting for Santa or hanging their stockings from 100 years ago. Santa even told me that he’s been stuffing the same stocking at a home in Arizona for over a century, Frank. We should get these people on a podcast one of these days to share the Christmas stories of the old days.

Elf Frank: That’s an outstanding idea. Wow, who knew that kind of stuff was out there?

Elf Crash: There are so many great things the world brings to Christmas, Frank. We should take some time during the year to talk about that stuff.

Elf Frank: We will Crash. How are you feeling now that we are into the New Year.

Elf Crash: You know, with better than 300 days until Santa launches again it can feel like we have a mountain to climb, Frank. But I’ve met with Santa and we made quite a list of things to work on this year. But I’m excited and you know what, before you know it, it’ll be time for Santa to launch again.

Elf Frank: Thanks, Crash, for your insights on Santa’s most recent Christmas flight. And I’m with you – we’re all excited to do it again. Thank you all for tracking Santa again with us this year, folks. We hope you join us in the months ahead as we write an all new chapter in tracking Santa. For my radio partner Elf Crash Murphy and all of the team at North Pole Radio News, we thank you for listening to the North Pole Podcast.



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