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THE BEDLAM FILES

Here's something to entertain you between Xmas and New Years Day. Enjoy!

"Tis the season to be controversial! (See below.)

13 Films To Make Yuletide Slay!



1. **DAY OF THE BEAST** (EL DIA DE LA BESTIA; 1995)

A film that should be a cult mainstay in the US (as it is in much of the rest of the world), but missed its calling due to a famously botched American release. No matter: **DAY OF THE BEAST**, about a priest looking to call up and take on Satan by committing as much evil as he possibly can on Christmas Eve, is still one of the most outrageous, twisted and darkly hilarious holiday movies in existence.



8. **GAME OVER** (36.15 CODE PERE NOEL; 1989)

This is the scary inverse of HOME ALONE, a French thriller that replaces the former film's mawkishness with darkness and perversity. About a kid who takes on a freak dressed as Santa Claus, GAME OVER proves that Gallic filmmakers can be every bit as exploitive and irresponsible as their Hollywood rivals. Pulled off by actual family members.



2. **KINGS AND DESPERATE MEN (1981)**

In place of the Yuletide classic DIE HARD I've selected this Christmas set Canadian arthouse thriller that was the subject of an unsuccessful lawsuit by its writer-director-star Alexis Kanner (who charged that DIE HARD's makers ripped him off). **KINGS AND DESPERATE MEN**, in any event, is a diverting and at times fascinating exercise in spirited over-direction.



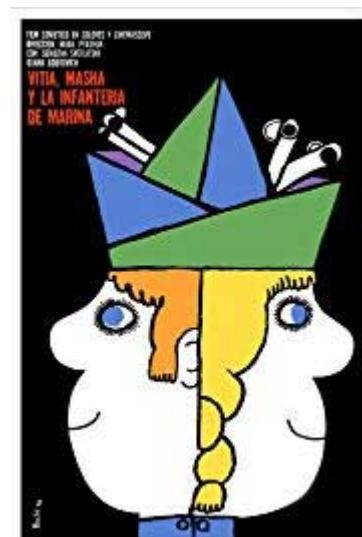
3. **BLAST OF SILENCE (1961)**

Arguably the foremost example of "Christmas noir," a most eccentric crime drama distinguished by propulsive low budget energy, an unexpectedly thoughtful, existential aura (bequeathed by quirky second person narration) and, of course, a deceptively cheery X-mas setting.



9. **GOODBYE 20th CENTURY (ZBOGUM NA DVAESETIOT VEK; 1998)**

A culturally specific bit of sheer weirdness from Macedonia. What-all *happens* I'm not quite sure; the official synopsis dubs this "a film of a generation which has grown up and lives at the threshold of a war that neither begins nor ends...a visionary tale which condemns the decayed century to a very scary death." It's impressively lensed at least, and there's a rockin' climactic shootout set to Sid Vicious's "My Way," spearheaded by a guy dressed as Santa Claus.

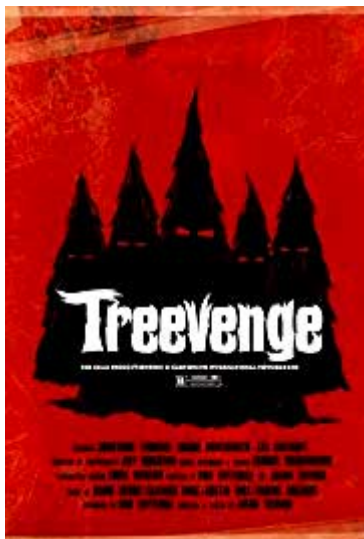


10. **MASHA AND VITYA'S ADVENTURES ON NEW YEAR'S**



4. RARE EXPORTS (2010)

Norway was the source for this fun inversion of the Santa Claus--or, as he's known in Europe, Father Christmas--legend. This Father Christmas, however, isn't the "Coca Cola Santa" we've come to know, but a cannibalistic demon that kills children who aren't nice. It's up to a plucky young boy to save the world from this monstrosity after it's unearthed in a remote drilling outpost at the North Pole...



5. TREEVENGE (2008)

A 16 minute short by **HOBO WITH A SHOTGUN** director Jason Eisener.

The premise is explained by the title: a bunch of Christmas trees, upset at being chopped down and imprisoned in people's houses, decide to take revenge against their human oppressors in a splat-happy free-for-all. Pretty goofy, obviously, but

EVE (PRO VITYU, PRO MASHU I MORSKUYU PEKHOTU; 1974)

Russian fairy tale kid movie weirdness in the grand tradition! This one is holiday themed, with a young boy and girl whisked through the branches of a magic Christmas tree into a fairy tale forest inhabited by a tin man, a fairy princess, a talking stove, a sentient peach tree and a scary witch looking to do the kids in.



11. CHRISTMAS EVIL (1980)

Quite controversial in its day, this sleazer stars Brandon Maggart (Fiona Apple's dad) as a toy factory worker who likes to spy on kids and list which ones are naughty or nice, then break into the houses of the naughty kids and leave bad presents. CHRISTMAS EVIL is far from great, but it does contain a good deal of non-Holiday friendly fun.

Eisener's irrepressible energy and demented inspiration keep it afloat.



6. PARIS PICK-UP (LE MONTE-CHARGE; 1962)

Another example of le Christmas noir, this one hailing from France. Featured are such quintessentially noirish elements as a femme fatale and an innocent man accused of murder, all contained in a superbly shadowy, brooding winter wonderland setting.



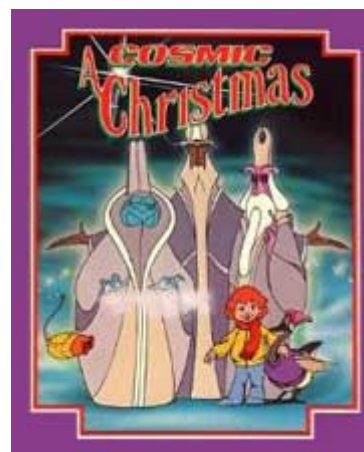
7. A MIDNIGHT CLEAR (1992)

A scrappy but effective nineties indie, adapted from William Wharton's semi-autobiographical novel about allied grunts in WWII stationed in the Ardennes Forest who enjoy a Christmastime détente with their Nazi



12. EBENEZER (1998)

One for the too-stupid-to-be-ignored category, a western reimagining of A CHRISTMAS CAROL starring Jack Palance. Included is a valley girl-esque Pocahontas (as the ghost of Christmas past) and Rick Schroeder as a guy screwed over by Palance who challenges him to a gunfight, the possible results of which are shown by the grim reaper-esque ghost of Christmas future.



13. A COSMIC CHRISTMAS (1977)

From the Canadian cartoon outfit Nelvana, a thoroughly ludicrous kiddie Christmas special involving a UFO that disgorges a trio of aliens who closely resemble the three wise men of the gospels, to whom a young boy teaches the True Meaning of Christmas. There's also a flying bicycle and a spaceship that flashes colors in the shape of a Christmas

adversaries, until everything goes horribly wrong...

angel, all done up in Nelvana's trademarked funky-exaggerated animation style.

NEW on the Site!

- **Xmas TV Specials for the Irreparably Brain Damaged**
- **Black Christmas**
- **Home for the Holidays**
- **Masha & Vitya's New Year's Adventures**
- **The Day of the Beast**



'Tis the season to be controversial!



Unless you've been off the planet in recent weeks, you're probably aware of the outrage that's erupted over a sweatshirt sold by Walmart.com depicting Santa Claus snorting cocaine (which has inspired claims like "Santa Claus is as real as Jesus Christ!"). This of course directly recalls previous Christmas controversies of more direct interest to readers of [The Bedlam Files](#).

There was the flick [BAD SANTA](#), which back in 2003 inspired all manner of furor from right wing pundits calling for it to be banned immediately; **the 1997 novel [SANTA STEPS OUT](#)** by Robert Devereaux, about Santa Claus getting down with the Tooth Fairy, a concept that ensured the manuscript (in the words of its author) "had a tangled time finding its way into print"; the self-explanatorily titled **1975 short film [SATAN CLAUS](#),** whose maker J.X. Williams reportedly caused a near-riot

when he inserted it into a kiddie Christmas matinee; “Nackles,” a **Harlan Ellison** script written for CBS’s **NEW TWILIGHT ZONE** that was axed by network censors because of its subject matter (an evil anti-Santa); and of course the **1984 flick SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT**, an unremarkable slasher programmer whose notoriety rests solely on the controversy it generated among the “ladies with pink hair” (to borrow an expression from Joe Bob Briggs) set, who actually got it banned in several states--and so, just as they did with BAD SANTA and the abovementioned Walmart sweatshirt (which is currently a bestseller on Amazon), turned it into a cause célèbre whose infamy remains undimmed.

I'm done reading. To the website!

The Bedlam Files

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