

Candidate 7 evidence

The Claus of a Predator

It's the most wonderful time of the year – a time to relax with family and friends, to rock around the Christmas tree and deck the halls with our tattered tinsel and crumpled crepe paper. As we hear those sleigh bells ring-a-ling and warm our hands on crackling Yule-log fires, let us not forget the serious issues. For too long, we have let festive spirit and materialistic desire distract us from what is important. For too long, we have forgiven and even celebrated one who breaks national and international law alike. We cannot continue in our complacency. Let us shake off the ghosts of Christmas past, and move forward into a future of equality and cheer! We must cast aside our carols and our mince pies, and arrest this monster, the one who calls himself "Santa Claus", once and for all.

Of all the heinous acts that have landed this "saint" on the naughty list, one stands out for its sheer depravity. As we peruse the aisles of crowded stores in search of that perfect gift for a loved one, it is shameful how little we stop to think about the conditions that those who stitched together granny's new scarf or brother's woollen socks may have endured. While the blind eye we turn towards sweat shops is truly unacceptable, we are at least slowly learning that no human should ever have to endure what many factory workers do. Yet we remain ignorant of the plight of the non-humans involved in making the tokens that this tyrant leaves under our trees. Santa leaves billions of gifts in our homes every year, but they don't just magically appear. Instead, it is up to his legions of elfen slaves to go through the painstaking, blister-inducing process of crafting toys for the world's children. To allow for healthy working hours, he would need an army the size of a small country! We can only imagine the conditions inside the grotto – are there thousands of pointy-eared prisoners crammed into rooms too small to hang mistletoe in? Or are there smaller numbers, forced to work day and night until their tiny fingers blister and break? No matter what the truth, the crimes against elf-kind that are going on under our noses cannot be allowed to continue.

Somehow, for this cruel conspirator, the atrocities occurring in his home year-round are not bad enough. Instead, this villain must add to his record with an annual trip, a world tour of crime and cruelty. Even the way he travels is awful. In the twenty-first century, we are past the point where animal cruelty is seen as in any way acceptable. Surely there is no crueller torture for a beast than to have to drag a heavy sleigh, full to overflowing with toys and perched upon by a man who is not exactly light, for hour after hour? Arctic sleds are one thing, but the sheer weight, speed and time involved in this trip make it a *bona fide* death sentence for whatever animal feels the tug of Santa's reins. What makes this even worse is the type of animal that he uses – how many flying reindeer can we name, except those who undergo this back-breaking endeavour? We can only assume that these magical creatures are the last of their kind, being driven to extinction by the disgusting neglect of Father Christmas.

The flight path that he takes is also in complete violation of international law. Sure, flying from Scotland to England without a passport is okay, but from the North Pole to South Africa? Santa seems to work under the assumption that a brightly coloured sleigh and some jingle bells are enough to allow him to completely disregard the world's migration conventions. Passport control and border guards exist for a number of excellent reasons – chief among them, is keeping shady characters like this one from spreading their mischief globally. Ignore these important regulations, hopping from country to country without giving any indication to the authorities as to your whereabouts, undermines national security and endangers international relations – all so that Santa can put some presents under trees!

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Once he arrives at children's houses he commits his most blatant crimes. Our homes are our castles, our fortresses against the perils of the outside world. Companies make big money developing advanced security systems to allow us to feel safe and protected as we sleep. Breaking and entering, sneaking past a home's defences and infringing on the privacy of its residents, is a crime that cannot go unpunished. Why is he the only person in the world who gets away with such a gross violation of the trust and safety of people around the world? One house break-in is a crime; thousands upon thousands, every year for centuries, is an abomination. We know this is wrong, we bring our children up not to talk to strangers and to shut their doors behind them, but we continue to act as if an old man forcing his way into our houses (and into our children's bedrooms!) is somehow acceptable.

As he leaves the buildings he cannot resist committing at least one disgusting act of theft – helping himself to whatever drink and biscuits he can pilfer before he staggers back to his sleigh to begin the process again. It may only be milk and cookies that he snaffles in some houses, but others are far more dangerous – how many times must he gulp down a glass of single malt before getting back into his sleigh? The sheer recklessness of this man – already clearly old enough to be a danger behind the reins anyway – allowing himself to drive through our night skies with the thick haze of drunkenness clouding his vision and slowing his reflexes is appalling. Does old St. Nick even have the decency to let air traffic control know that there will be an extra vehicle in the air that night? Of course not! Any other pilot exhibiting such foolhardy behaviour would be tracked down and locked away immediately – for everyone's safety. Why are we allowing this selfish fool to endanger the lives of innocent people? It can't go on.

Even if the horrendous extent of Father Christmas' crimes were not clear, his profile alone is enough to cause suspicion. This is a man who lives in disguise – why would a saint from what is now Turkey consistently be portrayed as an Anglo-Saxon white man in the media, unless he was hiding his true appearance? Clearly, he is worried that his dastardly deeds will catch up with him and is ready to make a quick getaway. In fact, his whole look is designed to allow him to slip away if he needs to – an easily shaved beard, weight that can be shed with diet and exercise, a bright red suit (originally green, presumably swapped when someone got too close to uncovering his nefarious schemes) to be swapped with jeans and a shirt at a moment's notice. What colour are Santa's eyes? What shape is his nose? We don't know – and that's just the way he wants it.

We are left with a choice: do we sit back in our Christmas-time complacency, enjoying our eggnog and our mince pies in blissful ignorance; or do we fight? We have the opportunity to make a difference; to make this The First Noel free from the corruption of a terrifying tyrant! We can take Christmas back! It's the most wonderful time of the year – to take a stand.