



ashley's avenue

By Ashley Murphy

Before beginning, I would just like to say a few things. Yes, I know the true meaning of Christmas. Yes, I know that Christmas is to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Yes, I know family, love, friendship, and the joy of giving from the heart are what this holiday is about. But since Santa has been brought into the Christmas season, there has been much controversy as to whether parents should "allow" their children to believe such a story. It has been argued that this takes away the true meaning of Christmas.

Which brings about the one question that everyone has asked themselves, at some point in their life, around this time of the year; Do I believe in Santa Clause? Well, for all of you non-believers, I have just the proof you need. Albeit, it is on VHS and several years old, but its proof none the less. If you were to see the video and still not believe, then part of the wonder and the magic of the Christmas season have somehow been taken out of your life.

There were many times I was told at school that Santa Clause wasn't real and many times over I was reassured by my parents

that, yes, he was very real. One such year, my step dad decided to hide a camera and catch Santa Clause on Christmas Eve bringing our presents. As myself and my two brothers finally got our parents out of bed, opened presents, and sat down, my step dad said that he thought he may have seen Santa. The video camera was then hooked up to the television for all to see.

There, to our little innocent eye's surprise, was a man dressed to the nines in a big red suit topped off with a little red cap. Slung across his back was a big, bulky sack filled with what we knew to be the presents that now lay opened all around us.

As Santa tended to do, he started separating all of our individual presents into piles. One by one pulling them out of the sack, he would set them down and keep reaching in until there was nothing left but a flat, empty piece of cloth. After the bulky sack had been emptied, the big jolly man then made his way back up the chimney. Mind you, the camera would magically turn off at this time. I guess Santa didn't want us knowing his secret to getting himself up the chimney.

As Santa was crawling his

Seeing Is Believing... Or Believing Is Seeing?

way out of our fireplace with another large sackful of presents, the camera would then somehow come back on, by itself. Of course, as little kids, we were amazed. Santa was at our house, on Christmas Eve, and he let us "catch" him on camera! We must have been really good that year, because Santa had to make several trips back to his sleigh to get more presents. And each time, the camera would hide Santa's secret to getting up the chimney.

And Santa could definitely put away some cookies. We weren't big on baking in my house, so Santa was usually left Oreos. Now, don't get me wrong, there were a couple of times that I did manage to bake some cookies, when time permitted. I believe there was one year, my Mom had even talked to Santa, who told her he needed to lose some

weight. My Mom suggested that we leave Santa an orange that year, for his sake, after all of the fattening cookies he would be eating throughout the night.

Of course, we did catch Santa cheating one year; he didn't eat all of the cookies himself! Much to my parent's dismay, we had a reindeer in the house! Apparently, Rudolph had not been so lucky that year to make it to the food that was left specifically for the reindeer.

We used to make reindeer food in school at Christmas that consisted of oatmeal and magic glistening "sugar" (glitter). Our teachers said that it helped the reindeer fly all night, because they get tired pulling the heavy sleigh. Before going to bed for the night, I scattered the magic oatmeal around the front of the yard so that it would be easy for the reindeer to get to. While waiting on Santa,

the other reindeer must have ate all the magical food, without letting poor Rudolph join in on the feast.

So, being the kind man that Santa is, he shared his food with Rudolph that Christmas Eve. The little, red-nosed reindeer was brought in through the front door and then taken over to the Coca-Cola tray where we had Santa's cookies and milk set up. Rudolph started poking around in the cookies, playing with them more than eating them. Luckily, Santa had already eaten all of the cookies that he wanted, so he didn't bother trying to stop Rudolph from sticking his nose on what was left of the snack.

Unfortunately, Santa must have a limit on how much he let's people see him, because after a couple of years the video tapes started coming up blank. This could have been due to

us kids getting older and some of the magic disappearing. Although, the magic of Christmas has never disappeared for me. But maybe it takes the innocence of a young child to bring about the magic that Santa holds.

Now, to sum it all up, I do believe in Santa. (Don't laugh!) I also know the true meaning of Christmas. I have never forgotten that meaning and the love it brings. But, to deprive your child of the joy of believing in the magic Santa brings to the holiday, is pretty selfish in my eyes. After all, they're only young once.

Have a safe and wonderful holiday.

Merry Christmas!!

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