

Why We Fight

The documentary itself is becoming a joke in its ubiquity, but hopes are especially high for a success story in the vein of *The Fog of War* with this one. Eugene Jarecki's Grand Jury Prize winner at Sundance is about the rise of what Dwight Eisenhower called in a famous farewell speech the "military industrial complex," and how it has led the United States into countless armed conflicts and wars over the past half

century. Jarecki, brother of *Capturing the Friedmans* director Andrew Jarecki, investigated this territory a few years ago with the documentary *The Trials of Henry Kissinger*. *Why We Fight* expands on it with interviews with John McCain, Gore Vidal, Richard Perle and others. Its investigation of the rise of the American Empire, its goals and the costs of furthering them are sure to make you ponder your good fortune at the end of the holidays.

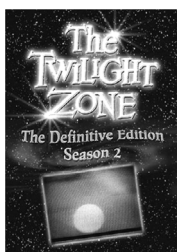
Opens Jan. 20. —WM

Cult Christmas

Seven holiday viewing alternatives to make your winter wonderland a little weirder.

by PAUL GAITA

NOTE: In compiling this list of offbeat and unusual Christmas movies, we looked beyond the titles that get the most play at this time of year—you know, *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*, *Silent Night*, *Deadly Night*, and the Hot Topics punk favorite, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*—and dug into the cult movie crates for the real weird-oh stuff.



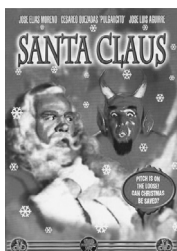
THE TWILIGHT ZONE: "NIGHT OF THE MEEK" (1960)

Most science fiction series err on the side of sentimentality for their Christmas episodes, but creator Rod Serling's story about a department store Santa (Art Carney) who becomes the real deal, blends holiday sweetness with TZ's trademark eeriness. Available on DVD as part of *The Twilight Zone: Season 2 (The Definitive Edition)* from Image.



CHRISTMAS EVIL (1980)

This berserk slasher movie offers one of the loopyest critiques of Christmas consumerism ever in its story about a deranged toy factory employee who takes the naughty/nice debate to homicidal levels. If the ringing endorsement of John Waters isn't enough to get you to see it, we can promise that this is the only movie you'll see this or any year with a flying Econoline van. Available on DVD from Troma.



SANTA CLAUS (1959)

Santa teams up with Merlin to battle an emissary of Satan (a spastic actor in red tights and Spock ears) for the heart of a little girl in this baffling Mexican fantasy. It's either the most surreal argument that St. Nick has replaced Jesus as the face of Xmas, or proof that America doesn't have a monopoly on bizarre Santa movies. No legitimate video release, but it plays every year on Spanish-language TV, without fail.



HE-MAN AND SHE-RA: A CHRISTMAS SPECIAL (1985)

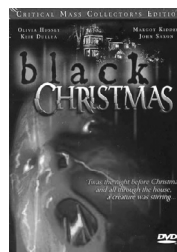
Come on, for real? Oh, yeah—He-Man, She-Ra and the whole freaky Mattel clan spend the holidays on Earth to teach Skeletor that domination of the universe totally pales next to getting a puppy for Christmas. Oh, and He-Man flirts up a storm with She-Ra, and Orko tells us about

Jesus (a nice, in-your-face for non-Christian HM fans). How we as a nation escaped the '80s alive is a total mystery. Available on DVD from Brentwood Home Video.



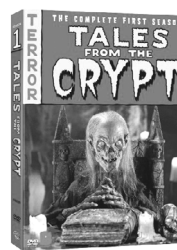
SILENT NIGHT, BLOODY NIGHT (1974)

Nobody's idea of a great movie (it's about a rash of killings at an old mansion), but the presence of underground legend Jack Smith and Warhol acolytes Ondine, Candy Darling, Tally Brown and the Mary Woronov (who was married to the film's director, Theodore Gershuny), make this the perfect stocking stuffer for jaded hipsters with Factory fetishes. Available on DVD from a variety of budget companies.



BLACK CHRISTMAS (1974)

If the December weather doesn't chill you, pop this Canadian-made thriller in your player, and you'll be shivering soon enough. Bob (Porky's) Clark's stalker-in-a-sorority-house creepshow is almost a template for all future slasher movies, from the killer's POV shots to a breathtaking switcheroo ending. And of course, they're remaking it (argh...). Available on DVD from Eclectic.



TALES FROM THE CRYPT: "AND ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE" (1989)

Robert Zemeckis directed this gruesome little groaner for HBO's *Tales from the Crypt* series, which pits a housewife (Zemeckis' wife Mary Ellen Trainor) against an escaped mental patient (Larry Drake) in a Santa suit. Filmed once before in '72 for a theatrical *Tales* movie, and starring Joan Collins (!) as the wife in a jam; that version hasn't surfaced on DVD yet, but this TV take has the right combo of coal-black comedy and crawly horror. Available as part of *Tales from the Crypt: The Complete First Season* from Warner Home Video.