

[1982 cover sheet]

"How to Be a Department Store Santa Claus"-- script

This appears to be all that remains of the infamous Santa Claus branching slide-show. The reader will just have to guess at the visuals.

It was intended to show that the cumbersome AVS-10 multiple-choice slide device could be used for "industrial training" with humor and a light touch.

21Jy82

A

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HOW TO BE A DEPARTMENT STORE SANTA CLAUS

Ted Nelson, 28<sup>n</sup> March 1969.

- SØ1. Title (ringed by holly): HOW TO BE A DEPARTMENT STORE SANTA CLAUS.
- S2. ~~1~~ Santa: "Humbug!"  
Congratulations. So you're going to be a Department Store Santa Claus. You may feel a little silly at first.
- S3. This may not accord with your usual picture of yourself.
- S4. But you can adjust it to your own personality and way of doing things, vary it to suit yourself.
- S5. This is a real position of dignity.
- S6. You are going to embody your store's toy department and whole ~~a~~ Christmas promotion.
- S7. You are a figure of majesty and awe to the kids.
- S8. You arke a great help to parents, a reward and a threat.
- S9. You are a piece of American~~a~~, and a vital figure in American life.
- s10. You personify the Spirit of Christmas, the love of giving; the charity and warmth of our ~~entire~~ entire culture focus on you. ~~xxx~~ You must uphold this heavy responsibility.
- S11. Not just anybody can do this job. It calls for a quick wit, an inner light of understanding. But most of all, it calls for someone who likes children. Management thinks you can do the job. It's worth a try. A real try.
- S12. Santa: "Okay, so now what?")

(Diagram: THE SANTA ACT.)

B  
~~But~~ you will probably have a rhythm as a show the

S13 / The basic Santa act is simple, and <sup>deal with</sup> process the children one at a time according to in a ~~xxxxxxx~~ three-part sequence. The first part is the greeting, where you say hello to a child and get him to come to you; then the conversation, in which he tells you what he wants for Christmas; and finally the dismissal, where you get rid of him and send him away feeling good.

(Diagram: BASIC SANTA LAYOUT)  
S14 The basic Santa layout may be thought of as a production line with one work station, you. The children wait in a lineup. When you summon the next child, he comes down an approach ramp to your throne; you deal with him there; and he then leaves via an exit ramp, rather than going straight to his mother. Mothers or whatnot are watching from the front.

mainly  
After one is ejected the next one is loaded.

There are two essential phases

S15 The mechanical part of the job, then, consists of handling two children at a time: one who is departing, another who is arriving. Basically there are two phases, which you need to get down to a rhythm. In the main phase you are concerned with a single child. You must put him at ease, and make him want to talk.

S16 In the transitional phases, however, you are dealing with two children at a time: the one you are dismissing and the next in line. Since you are in charge of the act, you must manage the departure of one and the arrival of the next.

You must manage

S16 The spiritual part of the job is another matter. S17 Think of the job this way: You must move the children in; listen to them; move them out; and be nice.

S16 This is to relate to the individual child, put him at ease, and hear what he has to say. (Legend: MOVE 'EM IN, LISTEN, MOVE 'EM OUT AND BE NICE)

S17 / Think of the job this way. You must move the children in; listen to them; move them out; and be nice.

Let's go through it once, concentrating on the mechanics.

✓ S18. Greet the child very politely. (K. You're next, young man.) You could also say (K. Now, son, it's your turn.) Or (K. Come hither, laddie.) Courtly and antique phrases are very good. And feel free to say ho-ho-ho at any time.

Move to S18

Address Be polite and address them respectfully. Do not call them Butch, Skip, Cap, Cutie or Sweetheart. Instead say Young Man, Young Lady, Little Man, Little Lady, or My Dear Child. Remember that most people treat children disrespectfully, and one of the reasons they love Santa Claus is that he does not. Finally, remember, every child on your lap is the child of a customer.

S19. ~~It is not essential for the child to sit on the knee.~~  
~~Whawpibhawnm Kixk~~

S19. Should the child sit on the knee? This is not essential.

S20. For one thing, the pillows in the costume get in the way.

S21. This can be awkward. If the children ~~xx~~ coming to see you are of the smaller variety, ~~whawhwnm~~ sitting them on your <sup>face</sup> is probably a good idea, in which case the pillows in the costume may be omitted.

S22. (S. Well, ho-ho-ho. How is your family? B. Fine.  
S. How is school? ~~Kixk~~ B. Fine.)

S23. (S. And what do you want for Christmas this year?  
B. Santa, I want... ((list of stuff)) )

S24. (S. Well, son, that's fine. I want you to eat <sup>helpful to</sup> all your oatmeal and do what your Mommy tells you, <sup>turn</sup> and we'll see what old Santa can ~~do~~ <sup>come up with</sup>.  
~~Whawpibhawnm Kixk~~)

Goes to S41  
& after

Don't make any promises. Remember that you are a representative of the store.  
You can include in this verdict any number of different instructions, depending on the time available and how moralistic you are feeling. You can even tell a story if you feel like it.

Now for the dismissal.

S25. ~~You~~ with one hand gently propel the child away. Do not actually push him.

S26 (S. Well, then, goodbye until next year.)  
By your words and manner you should ~~xxx~~ create a sharp sense of departure. You should make him feel good, build him up.

S27 Just say ~~gmwhwawm~~ something like ~~As~~ Goodbye, see you next year, give my regards to your parents, very firmly, and turn away.

So much for the mechanics. Now let's talk about the ~~spiritual~~ <sup>spiritual</sup> aspect. ~~about the problems of the~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~problem~~

(List: ALL THE CONVERSATION YOU NEED. HOW ARE YOUR FOLKS?  
HOW IS SCHOOL? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FOR CHRISTMAS?  
S268 / These conversation you need is quite simple.

All the conversation you need is on this slide.  
He (S. How are your folks? ... How is school? ...  
What would you like for Christmas?)  
You could say a lot more, like ~~xxxxxxxx~~  
asking their names, but this is all optional.

*WAB*

The object of the conversation is to put the children at their ease. ~~(S. ...)~~ (See pg B, *WAB*)

S29 (MS. Approach, my sweet petunia. G. Who, me?)

S30 (S. How are your folks? G. Fine...)

S31. (S. And how is school? G. Fine...)

S32. (S. ~~xxxxxxxx~~ Christmas is coming. Have you thought about what you might want in the way of presents?)

Don't be afraid to get right down to it. <sup>Don't be afraid.</sup> After all, it's what you're both here for.

33. (Legend: LISTEN TO THE ~~CHILD~~ CHILD. NOBODY ELSE DOES.)

S34 to S40

(G. I want... A pig and a pony and a library and a Barbie doll and a whole bunch of money... *Hobbiton of R.C.*)

S41. Now comes the verdict. *(AC)*  
~~(S. Be a good child, and Santa will see what he can do for you.)~~

~~It~~ If business is slow, you can say a lot more.

S42. Eat all your ~~stuff~~ <sup>spinach,</sup> and obey the laws, and do what your Mommy says, and ~~keep~~ <sup>keep</sup> your shoelaces tied and your legs crossed,

S43. - and mind the Ten Commandments, and don't cross ~~x~~ in the middle of the block, and be kind to your Daddy when he comes home tired, and Santa will see what arrangements ~~xxxxxx~~ can be made along the lines we've talked about. <sup>H</sup>)

~~That completes the basic requirements of the Santa Claus job.~~

Now you have the basics, ~~Switch with the machine~~ and we're going to try you on a few questions. Please turn the mode switch to Response, while we play you a ~~xxxxxxx~~ few bars of Jingle Bells. (Music) Now press the key with the circle.

E

S44. Which of these is wrong? You should not call a child  
one of the following: punk; my dear child; <sup>as soon as the green light</sup>  
~~young man; young lady.~~ ~~Choose your answer.~~ <sup>is</sup>  
~~and~~ press the appropriate key on the machine. ^  
If you get a red light, /choose another key/  
~~Are you ready?~~ the answer is wrong;

S45. Right! All right, try another.

S45x Which of these is ~~xxx~~ it most important to be?  
Clever; fast; nice; careful; or slick.  
(lettered multiple choice, no letters.)

S46. ^ That's right, be nice. Okay. Which of these is not  
a partz of the standard Santa act? ^ Greeting, listening  
~~moralizing~~ and verdict. ^  
(title: END of CARTRIDGE 1)

S46x7. ^ Right. No moralizing is necessary.  
This is the end of ~~Cartridge One~~.

Cartridge

SANTA TWO

C1. ~~title~~: *How to be a DEPARTMENT STORE SANTA CLAUS.*  
*Cupric & Two.*

C2. All right. Now that you've got the fundamentals ~~xxx~~  
~~of~~ the Santa job down pat, what more do you need to know?  
 Well, an important general rule is this: don't blow the act

C3. (S, comical voice. Okay, kiddies, step right up and  
 Santa the guru will ~~show your mind~~) *groove with your little peep*

C4. (Rock music) No, this is not Santa Claus. This is not  
 what the children expect and need. This is a kind of  
 action they must seek elsewhere. But that doesn't mean  
 there is no room for your individual touch.

C5. In the Ho-ho-ho, for example. You can say (S. Ho-ho-ho.)

C6. Or (S. Ho-ho-ho-ho.)

C7, C8, C9, C10, C11, C12. (Same.)

C13. There are a few other little problems ~~xxx~~ ~~Form~~  
 you ought to be ready for. For instance, what about  
 the child who hangs back when you are trying to bring on  
 the next.

C14. (S. Yes, lad, I ~~have~~ think I have a very good idea  
 of what you want most. ~~Now return to your abode and~~  
 we will see what we can do for us.)

C15. Another problem is fighting in the line. (B&G: bedlam.  
 I was first! etc.)

C16. (S. Now, children, that isn't exactly the Christmas spirit,  
 is it? Both sides will get an impartial hearing. You  
 first, little boy.)

C17. Another problem is questions. (B. Why do you deliver  
 presents? Why do the elves work for you? How does  
 your sleigh fly?)

C18. (S. Um. ~~Ho-ho-ho.~~) What do you say now? The children want  
 to know these things. They want to be close to you.

C19. You may ask yourself, "How do I answer their questions?  
 Will I have to bone up on a lot of Santa Claus lore?"

Don't worry about a fancy answer. You don't have time.  
 Don't be too specific. Give them a vague answer,  
 so they can

C19, cont. give them a vague answer, so they can make up the details for themselves.

and they do pile up; C20. Well, the elves do keep making them all year long, the North Pole is only so big; as a matter of fact, the reindeer need exercise.

C21. If you think the child is pulling your leg, make a joke of it. "Santa, I don't believe in you." "You don't believe in me? Oh, I bet you say that to all the Santa & Clauses." Or: "You & don't believe in me? Well, I don't believe in you either." Or: (German accent) "You don't believe in me? Ah-hah! Perhaps it might do you good to talk to me anyway." Or: "You don't believe in me? Young man, I am an institution. One doesn't believe in or disbelieve in institutions; one simply accepts them, they exist."

"What do you have on your mind, little lady?"

C22. "What do you have on your face, Santa?" A fake beard?" C24. S.: "Aaargh!"

C25. Now you know how to be a department store Santa Claus. It's not very hard, is it? And by using your imagination, and your own style of conversation, it can be your job, done your way.

C26. Santa--we think you're going to do a great job.

(Music) Now we'd like to give you a chance to test your knowledge. While we play a few bars of "Frosty the Snowman," change the mode switch to Response. When the music ends, press the Triangle and we'll have a question for you.

C27. How should you deal with ridicule from a child? With an obscenity, a joke, a threat or a bribe?

28. k Good. Girl: "Santa, will you really come to my house Christmas Eve?" Which of these should you not say: Ho-ho-ho; Old Santa Will Do His Best; Certainly; or Eat Your Oatmeal, We'll See.

29. (Lettered list of alternatives) All right. What is the most important part of your conversation with a child: listening, talking, joking.

30. k Girl: "Santa-- Are You More Important than God?" What do you say? Yes; maybe; no; ho-ho-ho.

31. Good. (Pause.) There are a few more things you ought to know, however. One delicate aspect is this:

*to ask for the questions. Now for the mode switch back to Response mode.*

(C31 cont.)

Be very careful how you touch them. It's a good rule never to touch the children below the waist, or touch the girls anywhere in the front. The children don't care, but the Parents are watching closely. What you see in this picture is all right, but it's easily possible to slip--

C32. (Mother:) "Eeek! That Santa Claus is a child molester!"  
Ex

C33. But don't worry too much. Your store is very experienced, and believes in you, and knows that you are to be trusted. One or two complaints about a manager are probably just crank reactions.

C34. There is one personal rule, however, that is very important. NO DRINKING.

C35. As in any job, if you can get tired at the end of a long day.

C36. You may think, "Wouldn't it be nice to have a beer." Don't.

C37. Instead take a break, hang up your sign,

C38. Have a cigarette.

C39. But don't drink. The kids may not smell it but the Mothers will. And one little slip--

C40. ~~Bye now, stupid Santa~~ "Bye now, stupid Santa--" indiscretion--

C41. (no audio)

C42. "Eeek! That Santa Claus is a drunken/child molester and <sup>monster and a</sup> ~~a member of an international conspiracy!~~ a fluoridation advocate!" prob.

C43. -- could mean a loss to the store, and to you. (Superimposed on this narration: floorwalker: "Okay, Santa is a baby, ~~you've had it~~ it's all over!")

C44. (Clamor of children pleading with floorwalker that they like the Santa Claus. This fades; on top of it:) A word to the wise is sufficient. ~~But~~ We need not dwell on these aspects.

C45. This is a job for a big man, and it's very likely that you can do it.

C46. As you go home, remember:

~~Ex~~ You are the spirit of Christmas.

C47. You are, in a sense, at the pinnacle of the Christmas tradition

C48. This store's whole selling effort depends on you.

C49. Santa: ~~xxx~~ "Ho-ho-ho!" (Jingle-jingle-jingle and fade.)

C50. Title: Created for CBS Laboratories, Inc. by Ted Nelson