

# Public Enemy No. 1

By Reg P. Wydeven  
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In the mid-1950s, Elvis Presley burst onto the music scene. He was immensely popular with teenage Americans, even though radio stations refused to play his “devil music” and parents decried him as an obscene degenerate. All this did was probably add to his popularity.

Critics described his performances as “stripteases with his clothes on” and even Frank Sinatra claimed Presley’s music was “deplorable” and “fostered almost totally negative and destructive reactions in young people.” Elvis was such a danger to America’s youth that when he appeared on ‘The Ed Sullivan Show’ on January 6, 1957, he was only filmed from the waist up so no one could see his “sexual gyrations.”

A half-century later, America’s youth faces an even worse influence than the King of Rock’n’Roll: Santa Claus.

The British medical journal ‘BMJ’ recently declared Santa a public health menace. The U.S. Centers of Disease Control, the Federal Aviation Association, the Department of Homeland Security and the Food and Drug Administration should all put out an ABP for the man in red.

In a tongue-in-cheek article featured in the annual Christmas issue of BMJ, public health expert Nathan Grills of Monash University in Australia asserts Santa sets a poor example for not only American children, but kids around the globe.

As part of his job, Santa allows children to sit on his lap to tell him what they want for Christmas. This close contact with thousands of coughing, runny-nosed kids exposes Kris Kringle to all kinds of infectious diseases and Grills alleges he is only hastening the H1N1 epidemic. Accordingly, it is unlikely children will see their mommy kissing Santa Claus this year. Additionally, by traveling all over the world, Santa totes all of these germs with him along with the toys.

Speaking of traveling all over the world, at no point does Santa pass through a metal detector, an x-ray machine or other security measure to ensure he is not smuggling bombs or other contraband into the U.S. He files no flight plan with the FAA and presumably enters restricted air space when delivering goodies to the White House.

According to Grills’ article, Santa employs few safety measures. He partakes in “extreme sports such as roof surfing and chimney jumping,” but wears no helmet. He has an open-air sleigh with no seatbelts, and he is often seen smoking pipes or cigars. Santa uses a slave labor force that work in sweatshop-like conditions. He also treats reindeer as beasts of burden and whips them to do his bidding.

Grills also claims that after centuries of consuming eggnog and cookies, Santa has developed a belly that shakes like a bowl full of jelly. Grills declares that, “Santa promotes a message that obesity is synonymous with cheerfulness and joviality.” Apparently being jolly does not equate with being healthy. Grills also found a correlation between countries that celebrate Santa and large numbers of overweight children.

Grills argues that Santa should trade cookies in for carrots. What’s next, the Cookie Monster is going to start eating vegetables, too? Oh wait, he has announced that “cookies are a sometimes food” and that fruits and vegetables became the staples of his diet.

Hopefully people will not take Grills’ lighthearted article too seriously, for if the world truly believed Santa was the worst threat to our kids since Elvis, we’d all have a Blue Christmas.

Happy Holidays and have a blessed 2010.

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