



COVERAGE REPORT

Title: Santa Jaws: When Jingles Comes to Town      Author(s): Warren Haney  
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Logline: *An elf in exile terrorizes a small Georgia town at Christmas.*

Recommendation:

Recommend       Consider       Pass

Comments Summary: This film has a lot going for it in terms of structure, concept, and well-crafted dialogue. With some additional character development and fine tuning, it will be an even more compelling script.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Needs Work
Premise	x			
Storyline		x		
Characterization			x	
Dialogue		x		
Structure			x	
Writing	x			
Originality	x			

STORY/SYNOPSIS:

In the early evening of 1972, CLARENCE, drunk and dressed in a stained Santa costume, stands slumped against the kitchen counter engaged in a heated argument with his wife, CINDY. Clarence ends the conversation with a swift backhand, knocking her unconscious, then leaves. At The Rusty Chimney dive bar, Clarence is holding court for a sea of drunken Santa impersonators. In the crowd, JINGLES, an actual elf, warns Clarence of his excessive drinking habits. Drunk and over-confident, Clarence lights a

flame and spews a mouthful of liquor at Jingles, setting him ablaze. BLITZEN, the bouncer, apprehends Clarence and tosses him into the street.

Back at the house, A YOUNG BOY excitedly pulls a sheet of freshly baked cookies out of the oven. But soon, Clarence stumbles in and continues to raise hell. As the boy cleans up Clarence's mess, he is stopped at the sight of Jingles standing in the doorway. Jingles praises the boy for his delicious handiwork and ushers him off to bed. Clarence emerges from the bathroom and before he can respond, Jingles slits his throat. Hearing the commotion, the boy sees what Jingles has done and attempts to stop him. The struggle causes blood to splatter, getting into Jingle's mouth. He transforms into a ravenous creature and runs unseen into the night.

Present day, KAYLA and BRADLEY NEILLY prepare for school. They start the morning off bickering yet in a moment of warmth, Bradley gives her some brotherly encouragement. Meanwhile, at the sheriff's department, gruff SHERIFF MICHAEL CALAHAN orders the officers to be on high alert this holiday season. He exits to his office to catch a moment of peace but is interrupted by OFFICER DEBRA NIELLY.

In the high school cafeteria, Bradley's friend PATRICK GREAVES, chastises him for not going to the biggest party of the year. AMANDA GALLWAY, Patrick's step-sister, urges him to cut Bradley some slack. BRODY, an injured footballer, LACEY RIVERS, his girlfriend, and NEEDLE, a wiry creep, entice Bradley even more. Leaving the cafeteria, Patrick bullies OLD BILL, a spooky old janitor, but Bradley stays behind to help him. Later, after skipping class with Amanda, Bradley is found by the principal and sentenced to Saturday School. After school, the misfit friends scheme to sabotage Bradley at the party. Later that evening, Jingles strikes again killing Santa impersonator NIK.

The next evening, while preparing for the town bash, Kayla challenges Bradley's priorities and, in a moment of frustration, he lashes out at her. Bradley arrives at the house party and Amanda takes him to an abandoned toy store. However, a couple at the party engaged in a heated argument, become Jingles' next victims. Calahan and an officer arrive on scene and after a stunning realization, he issues a code red.

At the toy store, Amanda prepares to execute the prank, but in a moment of reluctance she calls it off. Bradley, remembering his sister, hustles back to the bash. As the group berates Amanda for ruining the plan, Jingles arrives and begins slaughtering the group, leaving only Amanda to escape.

Officer Nielly arrives at the bash and is met by Bradley and Old Bill. At the height of Kayla's crescendo, Amanda bursts on the stage covered in blood and is immediately slain by Jingles' candy cane. Jingles begins to slay everyone in sight and just before he kills Bradley and Kayla, Calahan shoots Jingles. Unfazed, Old Bill then slingshots a peppermint in Jingle's mouth. Jingle transforms back to his mortal self and succumbs to his wounds. The next day at the Neilly home, the family, including Old Bill and Calahan, enjoy a peaceful Christmas day together around the fireplace.

COMMENTS:

SANTA JAWS starts the tension off right in the thick of a well crafted argument and doesn't let up until the end of the prologue. Starting the film off in a different period works well for setting the tone for the premise of the film. The dialogue is crisp and cutting in the first scene leading up to the well-timed slap. The added touch of Clarence whistling as he walks away was cringey in all the best ways.

Scenes in this script were written with care and attention. Some of the film's best writing appears in the prologue and the overall world-building and imagery is vivid and imaginative. The pacing moved along quite nicely as well, with well-established tension and conflict that was easy to follow. There is a beautiful sense of voice and style that are clearest in moments of humor. The dialogue was natural and authentic through much of the film and most of the relationships seemed genuine; especially the familial relationships.

In terms of character development, many of the characters are very clear. Both Clarence and Jingles leap off the page in very exciting and terrifying ways. Jingles is iconic, striking the balance of both tender and psychotic. Kayla and Old Bill were admirable sidekicks on Bradley's journey and didn't fully distract from the main plot. From the outset, Patrick, as an antagonist, provided a believable contrast between him and Bradley. The foundation of the film is solid with few technical errors and has a strong concept that, with some additional development, has the potential to be truly captivating. There were also opportunities for suspense laced appropriately throughout the film. The ending closed the film with a nice bow to the storyline.

Although the script was all around technically clean, there were some minor technical errors. Some characters such as Blitzen, Deputy Debra Nielly, Dillon and Carson needed a proper introduction. There were also a couple of "note-to-self" moments from the writer that needed to be omitted on pages 47 & 49.

At times, the dialogue of the characters strayed from their original tone. For example, on page 75 when Deputy Nielly says, "Anything amiss?" It might be worth combing through the script to see if there are moments when the voices of the characters wander from the original tone. Another place to double check continuity is on page 38 when Kayla notes that, "Christmas is gonna be weird without [dad]." If the father has been dead for a couple of years, why is this just now a new revelation for Kayla?

Although most of the characters are thought out and clear, Old Bill seems out of place compared to the tone of the film. Although he is very funny, portions of dialogue, particularly in their second interaction are somewhat awkward and distracting. There is also the sense at times that there wasn't a completely clear antagonist. Although Jingles makes his presence known in the film, he could have impacted Bradley a bit more directly. Having this added conflict would provide even more drive for Bradley to rise to the occasion and save the day.

Overall, this film has a lot going for it in terms of structure, concept, and well-crafted dialogue. With some additional character development and fine tuning this script can be considered for the next phase.