

Arts and Entertainment

'Silent Night' lacks Christmas cheer

Review by Beth Wilhelm
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

First Hollywood gifted the public with "halloween," then a couple of sequels. Now, less than two months before Christmas, Tri-Star Pictures is offering "Silent Night, Deadly Night." "You lived through Halloween, now try and survive Christmas."

"Silent Night, Deadly Night" follows an all-too-familiar formula. Small town, deranged killer, catchy jungle song throughout, lots of killing, an overacted ending, and an obvious sign that yet another sequel is on the way. Like all films, the success of the formula depends on the taste of the audience.

The story opens on Christmas eve, 1971, in some obscure Utah

town. Five-year-old Billy and his family are returning home from a visit with Billy's grandfather. Grandpa is a little nuts, and insists to Billy that "Christmas is the scariest damned night of the year," because Santa Claus punishes all the naughty little boys and girls. "Have you been good? Or have you been bad?"

Enroute home, the family stops to aid an apparent Santa Claus, who is having car trouble. Santa turns out to be a robber with a gun.

A terrified Billy watches from

nearby bushes as the bogus Santa brutally kills his parents and leaves his infant brother wailing in the car.

We then see Billy in 1974, at the Saint Mary's Home for Orphaned Children. He is constantly harassed by the Mother Superior. Lilyan Chauvin, as Mother Superior, gives one of the few credible performances of the movie. She feels certain that forcing Billy to sit on Santa's lap Christmas morning will cure his deep-seated fear of the guy. Little Billy doesn't agree, and knocks Santa to the floor

with a pretty impressive punch for an 8-year-old.

Suddenly, it's 1984, and Billy, now played by Robert Brian Wilson, has grown into a strapping 18-year-old. He's still at the orphanage, and is working at a local toy store. Life is going great, until the Christmas season approaches, and Santas begin to appear everywhere. The commercialization of Christmas can make anyone a little crazy, but Billy's frustrations are a bit extreme.

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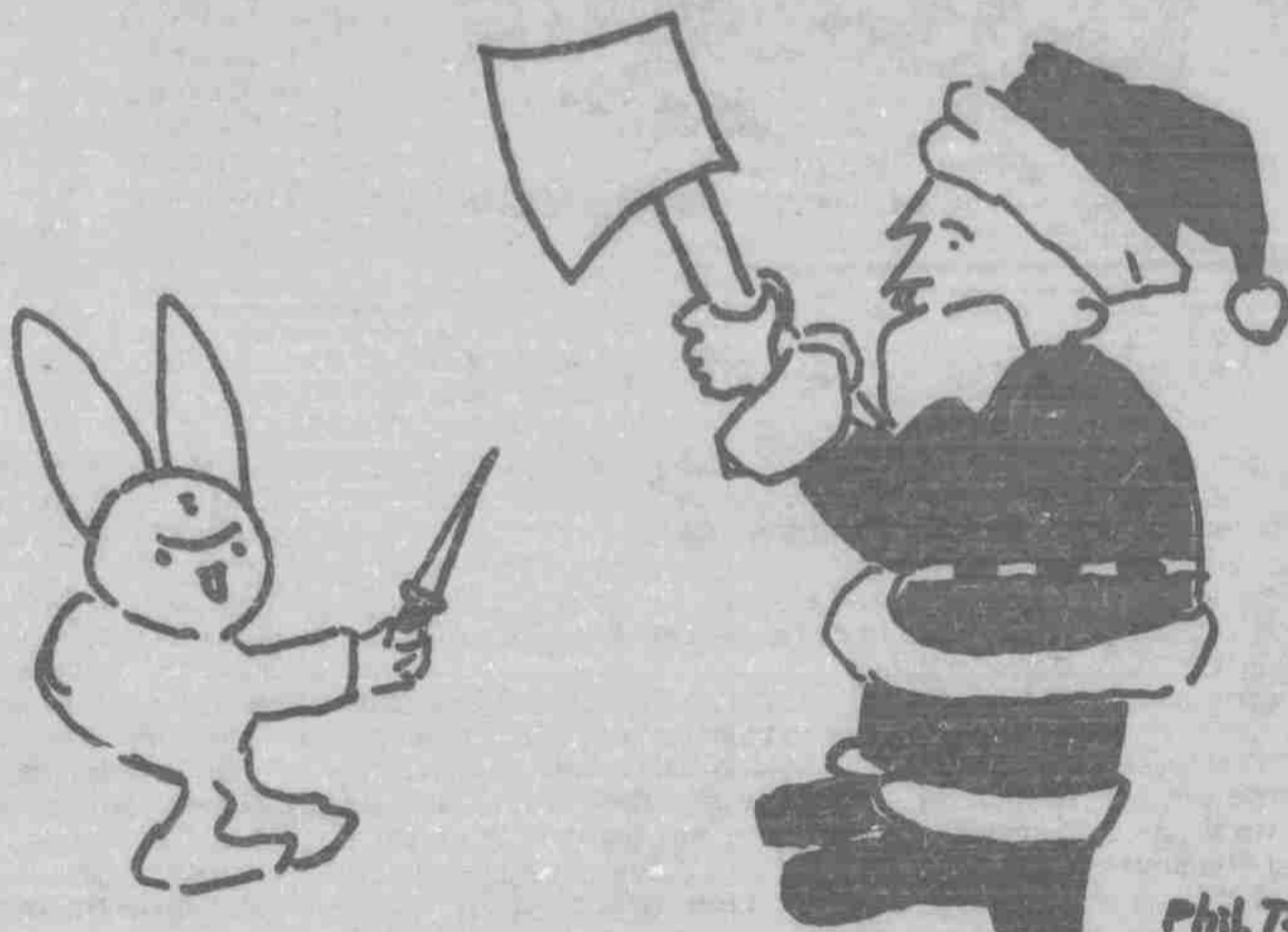
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