



SANTA SMOKES INFO & PRESS PACKET



Theatrical & Non-Theatrical Booking / Sales
Jim Browne • Argot Pictures
484 7th Street #2 • Brooklyn, NY 11215
(718) 369-1180 • jim@argotpictures.com
www.argotpictures.com



Santa Smokes

about

Germany-U.S.A., Romantic Comedy, 85 minutes

In this fabulous, award winning Christmas romance an unsuccessful actor, Johnny Jones (Till Schauder a.k.a Till Terror), takes the only part he can get - as Santa Claus handing out flyers in New York's Christmas frenzy. Hating this unwanted "lead role," Santa punches, steals and smokes his way through Manhattan. But everyone deserves a moment of luck, and so even this malevolent St. Nick eventually meets his Angel (Kristy Jean Huslander) and experiences his own "Miracle on 34th Street".

Santa Smokes features a brilliant score by Uwe Schenk and the Count Baischy Orchester, an impressive acting debut by lead actress Kristy Jean Huslander (Best Actress, Tokyo Intl. Film Festival) and is a visually stunning U.S debut by co-writers-directors Chris Valentien and Till Schauder a.k.a Till Terror (Best Directors, Tokyo Intl. Film Festival). *Santa Smokes* is the perfect holiday selection for all.



Santa Smokes

principal cast

Jonny Jones.....**TILL SCHAUDER** a.k.a **TILL TERROR**
(a struggling actor)

Angel**KRISTY JEAN HUSLANDER**
(an angel)

Jason.....**RICHARD GLOVER**
(the roommate, a Broadway dancer)

Sue.....**MELISSA FRIEDMAN**
(the girlfriend)

Mr. Johnson.....**RYNEL JOHNSON**
(the nemesis)

also performing:

Gordon (a casting agent).....**CRAWFORD MILLS**

Linda (gordon's wife, a soccer mom).....**SUZANNE H. SMART**

Jimmy (gordon's son).....**JAN HELMCHEN**

Mary (gordon's daughter).....**WIEBKE HELMCHEN**

Director.....**MYLES O'CONNOR**

Director's Assistant.....**TODD WOODARD**

Drug Dealer.....**EYE MCOOL**

Arabic deli guy 1.....**HABIB 1st**

Arabic deli guy 2.....**HABIB 2nd**

Hispanic bullfighter.....**RAUL MORALES**

and:

The City of New York – cops, beggars, French tourists, girls from Upstate, grandmas at Rockefeller Center, and many others...



Santa Smokes

crew

writers/directors/producers.....CHRIS VALENTIEN
.....& TILL SCHAUDER a.k.a TILL TERROR

line producerRICHARD GLOVER

composer.....UWE SCHENK
.....& ROLAND BAISCH ORCHESTRA

cinematographer..... CHRIS VALENTIEN

editor.....TILL SCHAUDER

associate producerSARA NODJOURI

co produced by.....PICTURE PLANET
.....THE HAUS, NY
.....CINEPLUS FILM HOUSE BERLIN
.....SPIELPUNKFILM

publicist.....LILY SHAW



Santa Smokes

the directors and the angel



CHRIS VALENTIEN grew up in a family of art-dealers in Stuttgart, Germany. After a short stint as an art exhibitor he got involved in the German film scene, quickly becoming a sought after D.P. and photographer. After working in San Francisco in the early 90s, he graduated from the Munich Film School, shot the acclaimed Neo-Nazi-farce "Boavista" starring German news anchor Uli Wickert (the Dan Rather of German TV), and wrote scripts for Munich based BioskopFilm (producers of the "The Tin Drum," "Homo Faber" etc). In 2002, he co-produced his first feature film, "Santa Smokes," with his friend and collaborator, writer-director Till Schauder, in New York and Berlin. The film won several international awards, among them Best Director at the Tokyo International Film Festival. While working as a D.P. on feature and documentary films in Germany he has partnered up with Till Schauder to produce the long-term-sequel project SANTA SMOKES THE WORLD, featuring a Santa Smokes adventure in a different part of the world each year, beginning with "Santa Smokes in Tokyo."



TILL SCHAUDER was born into a doctor's family on academic leave in Seattle. He was raised in Gottingen, Germany. Till worked at Roger Corman's Concorde Pictures in Los Angeles before meeting his friend and collaborator Chris Valenti at the Munich Film School. During his time in film school Till wrote and directed several award winning films, among them "Strong Shit" (Max Ophuels Reader's Award) and the acclaimed short action thriller "City Bomber"(numerous international awards). After earning a government grant for the arts, he studied acting at the Atlantic Theater Company School and at the Stonestreet Film and Television Studio. His New York theater credits include "The Field" and "Breast Man" (Atlantic Theater). Till has written screenplays for ZDF German Television, Munich based BioskopFilm (producers of "The Tin Drum," "Homo Faber" etc.), and several Berlin based producers. He has also written several English language screenplays, most recently "Santa Smokes in Tokyo," the first episode of the SANTA SMOKES THE WORLD series. In 2003, Till directed the Jazz docu-drama "Duke's House," which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival. His acclaimed U.S. directorial debut, "Santa Smokes," in which he also plays the lead role (using the stage name Till Terror), won several international awards, among them Best Director at the Tokyo International Film Festival and the Studio Hamburg Newcomer Award.



KRISTY JEAN HULSLANDER was born in Schenectady, New York. The youngest of five children, she learned young about how to get people's attention. Always a dreamer, she wished to be an actress as far back as she can remember, putting on shows for anyone who would watch, and sometimes, for no one at all. As a youth Kristy studied tap, jazz, ballet, gymnastics and twirled her baton in the local parades. After she graduated from High School she enrolled at SUNY Schenectady where she received degrees in both Humanities & Social Sciences and Performing Arts & Drama. Kristy continued her acting training at New York University's Tisch School of Drama. After graduating she remained in NY and did a number of plays until she landed her role of Angel in "Santa Smokes", for which she received the Best Actress Award at the Tokyo International Film Festival and was a nominee for Best Actress at the Method Film Fest in California. Kristy recently relocated to Los Angeles to pursue her career in film and television. Immediately after her move, she booked a Spike TV commercial, which won two Telly Awards. Kristy has recently finished the film, "Cutting Room" and can also be seen in Korn's new video, "Twisted Transistor".



Santa Smokes

the making of

Santa Smokes was made with the "mini" motto, working on a "mini"-budget with a "mini"-team and using a "mini"-DV camera. The Directors, Valentien and Schauder a.k.a Terror, had a vision that was as bold as it was simple: they wanted to produce an independent Christmas picture that could be marketed during the holiday season - not just once, but every year - while holding its own against the mighty Christmas competition from Hollywood. Most of all, they wanted their film to be independent in vision, not just in financing.

The two German newcomer filmmakers used a shoestring budget to shoot their English-language feature. Spotting a newcomer cast and using a 3-person-crew (including Valentien and Schauder) the filmmakers functioned in multiple roles -- Schauder played the lead role working under the name Till Terror while Valentien lensed the film. With Schauder dressed in a Santa costume, amidst a ton of other New York Christmas Santas, the cast and crew were never perceived as filmmakers. Most bystanders thought they were just tourists shooting the sights with a consumer camera. The unobtrusiveness of the small camera allowed for comfortable interaction with innocent onlookers, many of whom never realized they were being filmed for a movie. Individuals were often cast right off the street while the camera was already rolling. As a fantastic byproduct of this "on the fly" style, the people of New York and the city itself became an integral part in *Santa Smokes*.



Santa Smokes

where it was seen

AWARDS

Studio Hamburg – Newcomer Award

Tokyo International Film Festival – Best Directors Award

Tokyo International Film Festival – Best Actress Award

Berlin B Film Festival – Audience Award

FESTIVALS

Munich International Film Festival

Hong Kong International Film Festival

Tokyo International Film Festival

Puchon/Korea International Film Festival

Bahamas International Film Festival

Berlin B Film Festival

Method Fest

Atlanta Film Festival

Xground Film Festival

New York Independent Feature Film Market

THEATRICAL RELEASE

Two Boots Pioneer Theater – New York, NY

Eiszeit Kino – Berlin, Germany

TELEVISION PREMIERE

ARD German





Tracking Shots

Santa Smokes

by Edward Crouse

Elf's Santa smelled "like beef and cheese" and *Bad Santa*'s buttfucked. Every holiday film season sees the Santa suit thrown on some fumbler, and one of the better incarnations—a dope-pushing, chain-smoking armpit sniffer—is nigh. Elbowing *Bad Santa* for the same barstool (and likely lensed earlier, nabbing some festival awards), *Santa Smokes* puts its rival's glossier look and happy ending to shame. In hock to both his affectionate roomie (Richard Glover) and a local gambler, baby-faced actor Johnny Jones (co-director Till Schauder a/k/a Till Terror) capitulates to holiday employment as flyering street Santa, berating and beating up midtown strollers. A radiant, slumming holiday worker, Angel (Kristy Jean Hulslander), offers a few wispy ways out of his rut, which Jones manages to deep-six while drinking his way into some tender gay sex.

Jones-Terror—working on two levels by occasionally breaking character—spikes his own playfulness with a sizzling, squashed rage. Overall the acting is sound, the missteps few, and the murky digicam smash-and-grab sheen entirely apt for the cacophonous Christmas crush—shown in best light when the hero Travis Bickles it up for Euro-tourists ("Tu parles avec moi?") with camcorder in hand, while cops with pixelated faces wander around Times Square.



Rating: ★★☆☆

By V.A. MUNETTO

CALL THEM JOHNNY ANGEL

SANTA SMOKES

Running time: 85 minutes. Not rated (rough language). At the Two Boots Pioneer, Avenue A and Third Street.

WHO says you need a big crew and tons of money to make an enjoyable movie?

Certainly not Till Schauder (a.k.a. Terror Till), the co-writer, co-director, co-producer, editor and star of "Santa Smokes."

Working on a tiny, tiny budget, Schauder and co-director/co-writer Chris Valentien — both graduates of the Munich Film Academy in Germany — shot the quirky treat with a three-person crew, filming on the streets of New York guerrilla-style.

Schauder plays Johnny Jones, an out-of-work actor. It's not shaping up as a good Christmas for him: He's behind in the rent, his girlfriend is leaving him and he owes a gambling debt to a dude named Mr. Johnson (Rynel Johnson), who wants his money. Period.

Then he lands a job as a sidewalk Santa and meets a woman who says her name is Angel (Kristy Jean Hulslander), which is appropriate since she's dressed as an angel and handing out candy canes on Fifth Avenue.

"Santa Smokes" follows Johnny and Angel on a series of adventures and a brief romance, with an ending bound to put you in a holiday mood.





Santa baby: Till Terror



SANTA SMOKES

Till Schauer (a.k.a Till Terror), Chris Valentien

Our rating: ★★★★★

REVIEW

California dreamin'

Hate the holidays? You're in luck: Here's a bottomed-out Santa story so devoid of Yuletide cheer that it deserves a spot alongside David Sedaris's dyspeptic department-store elf and Terry Zwigoff's rude and crude BAD SANTA. Like countless other aspiring actors in New York City, jerky Johnny Jones (co-writer, -producer and -director Till Terror) knows that somewhere there's a breakthrough part with his name on it, but the only callbacks he's been getting are dodgy roles in student films or projects involving no pay, no lines, full-frontal nudity and condoms. Johnny's girlfriend, Sue (Melissa Friedman), is fed up with his pipe-dreams about stardom and moving to California, and she's sick of the way Johnny flirts with his besotted gay roommate, Jason (Richard Glover). In addition to not having this month's rent on his Brooklyn apartment, Johnny also owes a steep gambling debt to a Mr. Johnson (Rynel Johnson). In a fit of desperation, Johnny answers an ad promising \$100 a day to anyone willing to pass out fliers on the streets of Times Square while wearing a Santa suit. Instead of spreading commercial tidings and good cheer, Johnny smokes, berates passers-by and offers crack to tourists. Johnny's behavior is so belligerent that he's finally confronted by a fellow seasonal worker, a pretty young woman in an angel costume who's gotten herself a job passing out candy canes on New York City streets. Appalled by his behavior, Angel (Kristy Jean Hulslander) scolds him about his smoking, but accepts when he invites her out for a cup a coffee and a cigarette. On their second date, which they spend knocking back cocktails in an over lit diner while still in costume, Angel and Johnny are approached by a man (Crawford Mills) who offers them money if they'll come out to the suburbs and pretend to be Santa Claus and his angel for his two kids. They accept, but Johnny only sticks around long enough to threaten their little boy, sing a few carols and steal a pearl choker from the man's wife. When Angel later finds out what Johnny's done, she throws him out of her bed on onto the street, ending the only good thing that's going to happen to Johnny this holiday season. Seattle-born Terror (real name Till Schauer) and filmmaking partner Chris Valentien are both graduates of the Munich Academy for TV and Film, but their film has an authentically funky New York City vibe that many homegrown directors are unable to grasp. Using as tiny, unobtrusive crew and a mini digital video camera, they manage to capture the essence of the Big Apple in the only way possible: off the cuff and entirely on the fly. — Ken Fox



The New York Times

ON THE WEB



Trouble in Toyland: Till Schauder as an actor who plays Santa to pay the bills and Kristy Jean Hulslander as an Angel, in "Santa Smokes."

Mommy, I Saw Santa Claus Smoking

By ANITA GATES

... Mr. Valentien and Mr. Schauder (also known as Terror), who met at the Munich Film School, ... make their movie authentically American ...

The film, shot in New York locations including Rockefeller Plaza and Times Square ... is the story of Johnny (Mr. Schauder), a struggling young actor with problems all around. He can't pay the rent; he and his girlfriend are fighting; his gay roommate wants him; he isn't being offered any real work ("So in other words there's no lines, full-frontal nudity and no pay?" he says during a telephone call about one prospective job); and a man in a white suit is following him, threatening severe consequences if he doesn't cough up the money to pay his gambling debt.

So Johnny puts aside his pride and takes a \$100-a-day job as a sidewalk Santa Claus. On the job he meets a young woman (Kristy Jean Hulslander) dressed as an angel in a white robe, translucent wings, a tinsel halo and a curly blond wig. Insisting that Angel is her real name, she criticizes him for smoking and cursing in public while in uniform as Santa, but she and Johnny soon experience mutual attraction, and after singing "[Jingle Bells](#)" ... they share an evening of off-screen sex and playful cross-dressing. But she soon finds out the kind of man Johnny really is. ... Ms. Hulslander is often charming... Mr. Schauder's Johnny is one of those ... characters whom everybody adores.



Santa Smokes

reviews following the theatrical premiere in Germany

Berliner Zeitung

"This movie proves that a great Christmas story can be told outside of Hollywood conventions. 'Santa Smokes' by Till Schauder (a.k.a. Terror) and Chris Valentien has everything to warm the heart of the indie film fan: a unique story, great acting, shaky camera, and attitude!"

(Berliner Zeitung, December 11)

Berliner Morgenpost
WWW.MORGENPOST.DE

"The wolf in a sheepskin – chuckle your way into the holiday spirit with "Santa Smokes." Till Schauder (a.k.a. Terror), star and co-director, and Chris Valentien, co-director, have made a Christmas film that is as grotesque as it is charming - and has received numerous awards. In poetic images and with fast cuts this movie spins around the phlegmatic protagonist. By denying a picture-perfect happy ending on numerous occasions the film takes the audience on an emotional merry-go-round ride. The protagonist is as simpatico as the dialogue is funny. The film has screwball-comedy qualities with guaranteed laughs included! A great way to put yourself in the right Christmas mood."

(Morgenpost – Berlin)



"Santa Smokes – A refreshing debut film and a highly unique Christmas movie. Behind the holiday spirited façade of New York lurks aggression and greed. This is a tragic comedy about fierce competition, emotional isolation and existential loneliness in the Big Apple. The filmmakers – both graduates of the Munich Film Academy – tell their simple and true-to-life story from the perspective of an irreverent Santa Claus."

(Tip – Berlin)

DER TAGESSPIEGEL

"What is the most outrageous thing to do in America - besides being atheist? Smoke and curse when you're Santa Claus! "Santa Smokes" - this remarkable debut film - is a charming Christmas odyssey around a young actor in New York."

(Tagesspiegel – Berlin)



"Broadway shines as bright and colorful as a Christmas tree in this romance. A remarkable film worth seeing - thanks to its unique story and strong performances."

(Zitty – Berlin)



Santa Smokes

reactions & press clips from the Tokyo Intl. Film Festival

"The Chinese entrant may have won the grand prize at the closing ceremony of the Tokyo International Film Festival, but it was SANTA SMOKES co-director Till Schauder (a.k.a. Till Terror) who stole the show. SANTA SMOKES – the story of Johnny, a penniless New Yorker who meets an angel at Christmastime while smoking a cigarette during a break from his tedious job – won the best director award".
(Daily Yomiuri – Japan)

"Kristy Jean Hulslander plays a mysterious, glowingly sexy Christmas angel in SANTA SMOKES".
(The Japan Times)

"SANTA SMOKES co-director and star Till Schauder (a.k.a. Terror) adds fire to Tokyo Intl. Film Festival awards".
(Daily Yomiuri – Japan)

"Ingenious in its use of mini-DV camera to extract amusing performances from unsuspecting New Yorkers."
(The Japan Times)

"SANTA SMOKES turned out to be a double winner at TIFF as the best actress award was shared by its main actress, Kristy Jean Hulslander."
(Daily Yomiuri – Japan)

"This year the Tokyo International Film Festival was blessed by the presence of Till Schauder (aka Till Terror), who shared the Best Director Award with Chris Valentin for his film SANTA SMOKES. Once he had his trophy in hand at the closing ceremony, he proceeded to subvert the tuxedo event. Borrowing a video camera from a journalist standing at the front of the stage, he asked the audience at Tokyo's 2500-seats Bunkamura to sing "Silent Night" in Japanese. This, he explained, would be part of the sequel to his prizewinning film, to be titled – naturally – "Santa Smokes in Tokyo".
(The Japan Times)

"Director Till Schauder (aka Till Terror), the festival's court jester, was humorously humble when describing (potential difficulties) during the shoot of his indie film, SANTA SMOKES, which was honored with the Best Director Award: 'We had absolutely no difficulties', he said. 'Because we had only three people in the crew, so you don't have to fight with anybody ...'
(The Japan Times)

ALL THE NEWS WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR

The Japan Times
ONLINE

THE DAILY YOMIURI



Santa Smokes

reviews following the German Television Premiere on nationwide ARD



"In this remarkable debut movie, a chain smoking Santa starts a fabulous romance with a delectable Angel during Christmas time in New York."
(Stern, Germany's leading weekly magazine)

"A comedy with wonderful musical elements and a distinctive sense for the absurd: The debut movie of two promising filmmakers."
(Tip Berlin)



"There are wonderful shots of winter in New York, well known images with a fresh and new approach. The film renders homage to its setting. Dreamful. Funny. Snappish. Playful and also, tragic."
(Sueddeutsche Zeitung, Germany's leading daily)



"Johnny Jones, the 'asphalt cowboy' full of illusions, plays his own 'wonder of Manhattan' act, just in time for Christmas. A great debut film achievement!"
(Frankfurter Rundschau, Top Germany daily)

"The action takes place in New York. A starving actor who can't find work resorts to earning his money by putting on a Santa Clause suit. Although a cursing, smoking Santa is not recommended for children, this film is definitely worth seeing! The images, the sound, the editing, all elements are sophisticated, professional and very enjoyable."
(IMDB)



"A scurrile and bittersweet comedy with a lot of great music."
(Hoerzu)

"Heart breaking"
(Germany's top TV Guide)



"Till Schauder (a.k.a. Terror) and Chris Valentien made a unique and visually exciting, X-mass comedy, for every time of the year."
(Wiesbadener Kurier)





FROM THE BALCONY *Santa Smokes*

Bill Clark
Rating: **Fresh**

For the second time in the past month I have had my mind and soul reminded as to why I love Independent film so much. It is a true privilege as a reviewer to get to view films that you otherwise would not see. *Santa Smokes* is one of those films.

The film has made a splash at film festivals around the world. Fresh off of winning Best Director and Best Actress at the Tokyo International Film Festival, filmmakers Till Schauder and Chris Valentien are bringing their film here to the States for all to enjoy.

Made in 2002, *Santa Smokes* could rightfully be called the first incarnation of the "bad Santa." This Santa smokes, steals, and most of all is just mean to people. Perfecto!

Johnny Jones (Till Schauder - credited as Till Terror) is a down-and-out actor who just can't land a decent gig. It's so bad that during a telephone job inquiry he finds out that the part has no lines, no pay, and requires full frontal nudity. Ouch! So down on his luck is he that his girlfriend Sue (Friedman) has about had enough. She believes that his gay roommate, Jason (Glover), a Broadway dancer, is after him as well. Worse yet, Johnny is indebted to the very large Mr. Johnson (Johnson) because of a bowling loss.

Sue does in fact decide to leave, which in turn leaves Johnny in a very bad mood - just in time for his gig as a streetside Santa handing out flyers.

Santa smoking does not go over too well with the kids or the parents, and Johnny gets an earful from them all. He couldn't care less until he meets Angel (Hulsander), a sweet girl who takes her role as the streetside angel very seriously...until she is off duty. But will Johnny be able to come around with the help of Angel? Is there any hope for this Christmas with Johnny on the loose on the streets of New York?

Santa Smokes truly has something for everyone. The film, above all else, is really a romance, and it is told with a fresh point of view by screenwriters Chris Valentien and Till Terror. This is not your usual run-of-the-mill glowing romance with every cliché in the book.

Similarly, Valentien and Terror keep the laughs rolling throughout. With a super small crew, the filmmakers got some hilarious turnouts from people just walking along in New York. It is even stated in the press notes that the crew was so small that many people did not even realize they were shooting a film! Some of the documentary-style footage shot of the common passerby gets the biggest laughs of the entire film.

The beating heart of this production is Till Terror, and without a solid performance from him the film could have collapsed under its own weight. But that does not happen my friends, as Terror gives a very subdued, dry, and even heartfelt performance as Johnny. This is a pitch perfect role.

Kristy Jean Hulsander also gives an outstanding performance as Angel. She is the way we have angels pictured in our minds most of the time; quiet and caring. She is the common sense factor of the operation, and Hulsander nails the role.

My complaint about the film is small and ultimately meaningless, as this is a film with nary a wasted moment. The editing was a bit dizzying for me at times, with image upon image overlapping one another. While sometimes it is artistic, it can also be sensory overload.

Santa Smokes is the kind of film that begs to be seen. Fortunately for you New Yorkers, you have seven chances to see it in December alone! *Santa Smokes* will be playing at the Two Boots Pioneer Theater from December 15-22. Kristy Jean Hulsander, Till Terror, and Chris Valentien will all be on hand for the December 15 screening. I urge anyone in the area to go take a look at this terrific film.

As for me, it's always nice to add a new Christmas "must-see" film to the collection. Bravo!

