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Claus was set to write tell-all book

By Curtis Seltzer

BLUE GRASS, Va.—An unknown-but-highly-trusted source sent me 200,000 documents on a CD this week that were liberated from the New York book-publishing industry.

Inspired by WikiLeaks, I have decided to make them public in hope of getting sued. This will provide me with material to write a John-Grisham thriller, which will get me on Oprah, which will bring me riches and celebrity. My legal defense will be handled by the old-line New York law firm of Sludge, Grudge and Fudge, LLC. The managing partner, a personal friend, has promised to defend me to my last penny.

Here's one sample of what I hope to post on my website,
www.LeakyPecky.com.

To: Ms. Tara Infirma, Literary Agent
From: S. Claus, first-time author

I have a great idea for a non-fiction novel!!!

There's this roly-poly, old guy who lives at the North Pole with his roly-poly, old wife and a bunch of elves. They make toys all year. He dresses up in a red snowsuit on Christmas Eve and sneaks around stuffing stockings hung by chimneys with care. And here's the good part. Flying reindeer pull the old guy's loaded sleigh through the air! I need an advance of 50,000 cookies to whip this into a first draft. I know nothing about the book business. Will you represent me?

To: Mr. Claws
From: Ms. Infirma, Literary Agent

I don't handle science fiction, especially fantasy.

And I rarely respond to first-time authors, because you people are bottomless pits for my time. But in the spirit of the Season, I will offer a few observations on your "book proposal."

First, each of your principal characters lacks depth. What motivates the old, fat guy to spend all year making toys only to give them away? The only plausible explanation is that he's a front for the Chinese dumping toys below the cost of production to gain market share. Is that why he dresses in red? And what schnook of a wife would stay with a husband who's clearly

deranged and doesn't take her to Florida for the winter?

Second, no reader will believe your plot premises—elves at the North Pole, flying caribou who don't have wings, free toys distributed without even a shipping-and-handling charge. Come on!

Third, there's no conflict. What hurdle does the fat guy have to overcome—banks foreclosing on his workshop, elves striking for pay, reindeer patted down at airports?

Finally, how much cash are you willing to pay me in advance for shopping your twaddle to my friends in publishing?

To: Ms. Infirma, Literary Agent
From: Santa, first-time author

Do you have any substantive suggestions about characters and plot?

Weren't you the kid in Parsippany who watered my lap years ago?

To: Dependent Clause
From: Lady Infirma, Literary Agent

I have never set foot in Parsippany, except for that brief period between the ages of two and 18.

I suggest that you recast the fat guy as a fugitive hedge-fund manager hiding in the tropics after stealing from the rich (his clients) and giving to the poor (himself). His female companion is trying to launch a line of male perfumes using blended musks she plans to harvest from polar mammals. The elves were sent here from the distant planet, Drippedon, to colonize the Earth. And the reindeer are actually mutant sea slugs intent on spreading toxic slime over virgin rainforests. Work out your plot within these realistic parameters.

To: Ms. Infirma, Literary Agent
From: Santa, first-time author

I get it now!!!

The protagonist invests his last billion in Runny Yarns, the one surviving U.S. hosiery manufacturer, just before stealing one stocking from each child he visits on Christmas Eve. No kid wants to go back to school with a mismatched pair, so there's a stampede to buy socks. And since he only has to manufacture one sock to make a pair, the guy is about to make a killing...when he has a partial change of heart. The night before school starts

he returns the wrong sock to each child, along with a 20-percent-off, Sock-It-To-Me discount coupon for all future Runny Yarns purchases. Since he's raised all prices by 35 percent, he makes a mint.

Meanwhile, his girlfriend runs off with some dude named Osama who entombs her in a green-certified earth shelter in Somalia. From this cave, she begins importing pieces of the North Pole, which she shaves into flavored ice balls. In three days, her street-corner stands are generating 60 percent of the country's GDP and, without her knowledge, are inadvertently supporting terrorists on three continents. Her entrepreneurial venture ends abruptly, however, when Osama and his boys blow up her stands because they object to unwed women earning income by selling American decadence, even when it supports their cause.

Meanwhile, the Obama Administration rescues the alien elves from enslavement in the frozen workshop. Over Michelle's objections, they are fed as if they were normal public-school kids, which causes them to grow in height and gain weight. Since their skins are inelastic, the elves explode. The Obama Administration claims credit for saving the Earth from the Drippendonites. Republicans object to Obama feeding illegal aliens with U.S. tax dollars.

Meanwhile, the sea slugs disguised as reindeer succumb to increasing levels of greenhouse gasses blown at them by the 535 members of the Congress of the United States. Democrats object to the loss of this new species, which is now put on the endangered list.

When you net it all out, I'd call it a happy ending. Can you work with it?

To: Santa Claws (grrrr!)
From: Dame Tara Infirmia, Literary Agent

We have lift off. Send me \$50,000 to make my first phone call.

To: Ms. Infirmia, Literary Agent
From: Santa, first-time author

How about an IOU for sock options in Runny Yarns? This is an inside tip. Don't tell anyone.

To: Santa Baby
From: Your Princess, Tara Infirmia

I feel the earth move under my feet.

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On Christmas Eve, Santa decided that being a celebrity author would alter his life in ways that he would not like. He ended his correspondence with Ms. Infirma, gave Rudy and the gang extra hay and told the Missus not to wait up—which she always did anyway.

Ms. Infirma is now pitching her own book about how she was dumped on Christmas Eve. Oprah has scheduled her for three appearances.

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