

TOP FIVE REASONS MY DAD HAS CANCELLED CHRISTMAS

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Christmas is, like most families, mine's favorite holiday. My dad is the opposite. To him, there's nothing more disturbing than a bearded white man who goes around the world breaking and entering homes *while completely sober*. My dad is like the Grinch, except he wears pants most of the time and he hates dogs. He wouldn't think twice about sleighing his ass down into Whoville and making sadness rain all over those Whokids. In fact, he's done it to his Ownkids on several occasions. The first time he cancelled Christmas I was a mere 9 years old.

A cancelled Christmas looks something like this: foot stomping and huffy faced children and a dad that tries to take all of the money out of my mom's purse. The only difference between a cancelled Christmas and a non cancelled Christmas is how drunk my dad is at any given point. Cancelled Christmases end up with him being incapacitated so it's *technically* cancelled for him.

CHRISTMAS CANCELLED at Age 9: No Whiskey.

When we were kids we had no idea what the difference between whiskey and milk was except that one smelled bad (milk) and the other promoted that healthy smile (...milk, also). We weren't allowed to touch the whiskey until someone in the family died or we were off to college, whichever came first. So we used to pour whole glasses full to leave out for Santa, not knowing the amount on which a person (even a magical one like Santa) could get drunk.

Thankfully, though, this allowed my dad to play the part of Santa willingly and even with a little bit of cheer. Since he was still drunk in the morning, he could agreeably sit through gift giving without calculating costs in his mind. A win-win situation for all (especially the Jameson Corporation).

The year that we ran out of whiskey was the first year that my dad had to do something drastic. We hadn't been thinking about Santa's appetite in advance and our liquor cabinet was empty of spirits (except for the Holy Ghost – he's around always). Christmas was cancelled and to us, it was nasty reminder who the leader in the household was – my mother. "Santa" got a double tall glass of milk that night and the next morning it hadn't been touched. Coincidentally, this is the year that I suspected Santa might not be real.

CHRISTMAS CANCELLED at Age 10: The Year My Brother Was Born.

It was the first Christmas we were having in our new house and Daniel was two months old. Not that it bothered me much but he wasn't sleeping through the night and this was enough to break the back of

any grown man. So my dad pre-cancelled Christmas in an attempt to mitigate baby's first Christmas disappointment.

Daniel ended up with twice as many presents (that he had neither the upper body strength nor the teeth to open them with) because my mom wanted to make sure it was memorable. Of course, his brain wasn't fully formed at the time and VHS is no longer a thing so *no one remembers it anyway*. Actually, good call on that cancelled Christmas, dad.

CHRISTMAS CANCELLED at Age 15: The Year My Mother's Credit Cards Wouldn't Stay on Lockdown.

My mom likes to shop. She doesn't worry herself with budgets or limits or any other restrictive sounding words. So the year that our house had two teenagers and a toddler my dad knew the Christmas situation was becoming dire. He took a sharpie permanent marker and wrote on all of my mom's credit cards "STOP SPENDING MY \$\$".

This only real resistance this trick gave my mother was some laughs and eyebrow rising from cash register workers. My mom would put on her sweetest face and say, "Oh, my husband is a total asshole." They always ended up swiping that card.

CHRISTMAS CANCELLED at Age 18: The Year My Dad Invoked Christ as a Backup.

In order to properly guilt us into submission around the holidays like a good Catholic, my dad started using graphic imagery of Jesus Christ in everyday conversation to get us to eschew gift giving and holiday cheer. For example:

- **Mom:** *Kids, what do you want for Christmas?*
- **Dad:** *I'm sure Jesus would have loved a gift when he was nailed and dying on the cross for our sins.*

or:

- **Mom:** *We're late for Christmas Mass!*
- **Dad:** *I'm sure Jesus wished that the Romans would have been late to the party when **they stabbed him in the side with a sword.***

or even:

- **Daniel:** *Dad, why does it snow?*
- **Dad:** *Jesus is weeping cold and bitter tears because we celebrate Christmas like pagans.*

Frankly, these discussions had us so disgusted that even we were ready to cancel Christmas that year.

CHRISTMAS CANCELLED at Age 19: The Year of the Movie "12 Dogs of Christmas".

My dad hates dogs! Just being put anywhere near a dog for longer than a few minutes would jeopardize a normal Christmas. Once canines started riding on the coattails of the Lord in film, my dad knew that the whole business just wasn't for him. He was so disgusted that I don't even think he's been to a movie theatre since.

The year that I brought home my dog for Christmas was the year that we had to leave out TWO glasses full of whiskey for "Santa", that's how disgusted my dad was. But since this is a Top Five list, we cannot and will not get into it. Needless to say, Christmas was cancelled that year and presumably every year my dog is alive henceforth.