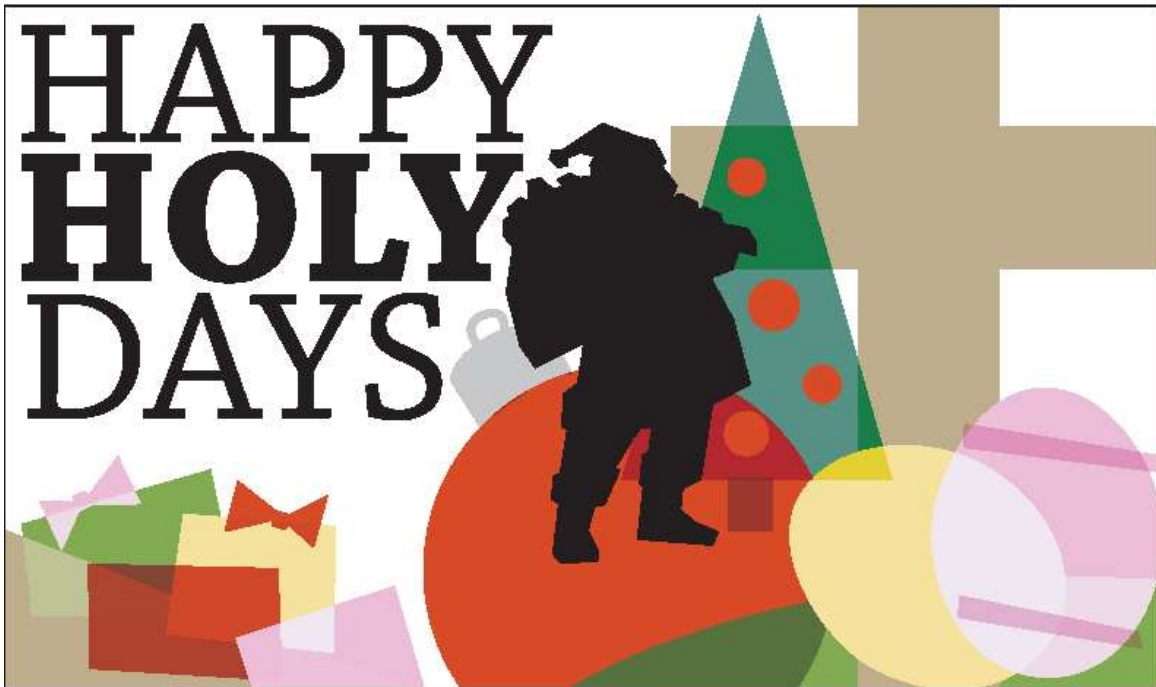


HAPPY HOLY DAYS

a play

by Rob Roznowski



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Happy Holy Days notes:

/ indicates overlapping dialogue.

The show is performed with 6 actors playing the following roles:

Actor 1 Sherrie

Actor 2 Mom, Kate, Joan, Jennie

Actor 3 Gloria, Lynette, Abraham Lincoln, Puja

Actor 4 Harvey, Dale, Brian

Actor 5 Dad, Paul, George Washington, Jesus, Jacob, Brandon

Actor 6 Baby New Year, Leprechaun, Hank, Easter Bunny, Uncle Sam, Allen

Scenes:

Prologue

Christmas 1977

New Year's Eve 1990

Martin Luther King Day 1996

Valentine's Day 2007

President's Day 2028

St. Patrick's Day 1991

April Fool's Day 2013

Easter 1981

Memorial Day 2039

Fourth of July 1998

Labor Day 2006

Columbus Day 2022

Halloween 1986

Thanksgiving 2010

CHRISTMAS

SHERRIE

Christmas 1977. I was 6 years old.

(DAD enters in bellbottoms with an aluminum Christmas tree. He sets it up and stares at it for a while. SHERRIE enters and stares at DAD staring at the tree.)

SHERRIE

Dad?

DAD

Geez, Sherrie, you scared me.

SHERRIE

Sorry. / Dad?

DAD

That's OK.

SHERRIE

That's pretty.

DAD

Isn't it?

SHERRIE

Shiny.

DAD

Yep.

(Pause.)

SHERRIE

Why do we have a Christmas tree every year?

DAD

Well, that is because it is a tradition.

SHERRIE

What's tradition?

DAD

It means that you do it regularly – all the time... a custom... it's handed down from your family...

SHERRIE

Like the "Thanksgiving Thanks" where we say what we're thankful for.

DAD

Exactly. Yes, that is a tradition from my family.

SHERRIE

So, where did the tree start from?

DAD

Well, it's a symbol.

(SHERRIE crashes her hands together like cymbals.)

DAD

No, not like that. It symbolizes... Represents. Stands for things.

SHERRIE

Like Mom said that Nixon symbolizes everything that is wrong with this country?
Like that?

DAD

Yes, I guess.

SHERRIE

Did Jesus? Did Jesus have a Christmas tree?

DAD

Oh dear... well this is going to be a little complicated... Here's an idea. Why don't you ask your Sunday School teacher about this?

SHERRIE

She doesn't like when I ask questions. She says I should just listen.

DAD

I see.

SHERRIE

She likes it when I draw pictures of Christ's suffering.

DAD

I see.

SHERRIE

You didn't answer my question. Remember you said it's rude not to answer questions.

DAD

I did say that. (Pause.) Well, Christmas is divided into two parts. So there is the Jesus part and the Santa part. Does that seem clear?

SHERRIE

Do Jesus and Santa not like each other?

DAD

No, I am not saying that. / Don't put words in my mouth.

SHERRIE

Are they mad at each other? Do they not play well together?

DAD

No, that's not what I am saying. It is just that there are two separate sets of traditions. So, stockings and coal and the like represent the Santa part of Christmas and the manger and church and those customs are Jesus' part.

SHERRIE

Is the tree for Santa or for Jesus?

DAD

The tree falls into the symbols of the Santa part.

SHERRIE

So what does the tree symbolize? (Does the hand cymbal thing.)

DAD

I am going to say it symbolizes nature... for now.

SHERRIE

So we cut down trees for nature?

DAD

Yes, agreed. It sounds a little... when you say it that way...

SHERRIE

But that is a tree made out of metal.

DAD

Yes, I was just thinking about that. Let's just stand and look at the tree.

SHERRIE

The symbol.

(SHERRIE does the hand cymbal thing again. DAD puts her hands to her sides.)

DAD

Yes. Shhh...

(SHERRIE and DAD stand and stare at the tree a while. DAD starts to put the star on top.)

SHERRIE

What does the star mean?

DAD

Oh dear, we were being so quiet for a bit there.

SHERRIE

Yeah that was quiet... What does the star stand for?

DAD

How about this? What do you think it stands for?

SHERRIE

I think it is the star of Bethlehem where Jesus was founded.

DAD

Sure. That sounds about right.

SHERRIE

Or it could be a light to show Santa where to put our gifts. (Shouting.) Like, "Put your presents under here!!!!"

DAD

Sure. That could be it too...

SHERRIE

So which one is right?

DAD

The star is for Jesus.

SHERRIE

But that / doesn't...

DAD

Isn't that why we bought those encyclopedias? Go check them.

SHERRIE

The star for Jesus on a tree for Santa?

(DAD stands silent. He shouts offstage.)

DAD

Mom-er get in here!

(SHERRIE and DAD stand staring awkwardly at each other for a few seconds. MOM arrives with a spatula in her hands. She is pregnant.)

MOM

What is it? I have cookies in the oven.

DAD

Sherrie here has been asking some really excellent questions, and I didn't want to have you miss the conversation.

MOM

Well, what?

SHERRIE

Why does everyone have a Christmas tree?

DAD

Yes, there you go, that one.

MOM

Well... Christmas trees have their roots, no pun intended, in... tradition.

DAD

Tried that one. I went with nature.

MOM

That sounds about right. And not everyone does have a Christmas tree. The Finklestein's don't have a tree because they're Jewish.

SHERRIE

So the Jewish hate nature.

MOM

Oh dear. / Oh, no.

DAD

See? This is what I have been dealing with. Sherrie, Christmas is just a really big holiday and there are lots of customs and traditions and we can't know the origins of all of them.

MOM

That's why we bought you those encyclopedias.

DAD

Tried that one, too.

MOM

Oh...

DAD

And Sunday School.

MOM

What about asking Pastor Keister?

DAD

Didn't try that.

SHERRIE

Mom, you know Pastor Keister said how much he hates questions. He says they're for the weak.

MOM

Yes. Well, Sherrie you understand we celebrate on certain days because they are holidays?

SHERRIE

Uh huh.

MOM

So the holidays are special. That time is set aside from work by the government and we are sort of... forced to get together with family and give presents and send cards because that is/the way it has always been.

DAD

...Tradition.

SHERRIE

So, the government makes you give gifts?

MOM

No, we do that to show our love for each other.

DAD

And then Santa brings more presents to the children because they were good and didn't question things.

MOM

Dad!

SHERRIE

So did Santa deliver presents to Jesus?

DAD

Oh dear! Mom-er, this one's all yours.

MOM

Well, no, the Three Wise Men brought Jesus presents. Jesus did not get presents from Santa.

SHERRIE

Was Jesus a bad boy?

MOM

No. No, not a bad boy. He was just far away / and that was a problem.

SHERRIE

But you said Santa can deliver presents all over the world in one night.

MOM

Well, Santa wasn't alive / at the time Jesus was born.

SHERRIE

But you said Santa is magic and has been alive forever.

MOM

I did—

SHERRIE

You said Jesus was magic too.

MOM

I did—

SHERRIE

You said he was so magic that he can do anything.

MOM

True.

SHERRIE

Is Jesus more magic or is Santa?

MOM

Dad!

Well—
DAD

I—
MOM

SHERRIE
You said Jesus and Santa knows if I have been bad

They do.
BOTH

SHERRIE
And that they can both punish us.

They / can.
DAD

Santa won't get you any toys—
MOM

SHERRIE
You said that they know everything about everyone.

They / do.
DAD

All knowing.
MOM

You said—
SHERRIE

Well—
DAD

But—
MOM

SHERRIE
Are you making all of this up? Are Santa and Jesus even real?

(MOM and DAD stand stunned. Silence.)

DAD

Sherrie, / don't be disrespectful!

MOM

Sherrie, enough of that talk.

SHERRIE

I'm sorry.

DAD

Enough.

MOM

Awful.

DAD

That is a terrible thing to say about Jesus.

MOM (Pause, then quickly.)

And Santa.

DAD

And Santa!

SHERRIE

Sorry. I really am sorry.

DAD

Sherrie...

SHERRIE

Sorry.

(Pause as all recover.)

MOM

That's a good girl. And now, if you will excuse me, I better check my cookies.

(MOM beats a hasty retreat.)

DAD

Mom-er!

(Silence.)

SHERRIE

Dad?

HHD

1/7/2012

DAD (exasperated)

Yes, Sherrie.

SHERRIE

Can I ask you a question?

(Lights change.)

NEW YEAR'S EVE

SHERRIE

New Year's Eve 1990. I was 19 years old.

(SHERRIE is being pulled onto the roof of an apartment building in New York City by her best friend, GLORIA. GLORIA and everyone else in this scene, besides SHERRIE, are tipsy. There is music and madness below.)

GLORIA

Look, what is your problem?

SHERRIE

I just feel weird.

GLORIA

You are weird. You said you wanted to come and then you just stand off in the corner.

SHERRIE

It just feels so different. Everyone just coming up and / talking close.

GLORIA

Yeah, it's a party. It's not the devil's work. It is a New Year's Eve Party. You said you wanted to come. But you can't just stand there like (GLORIA stares with her eyes wide and mouth agape.)

SHERRIE

I didn't do that.

GLORIA

Did. Look, what would you be doing at church right now?

SHERRIE

The service. Then the Fellowship Hall with sparkling grape juice. Then watching the ball drop on TV.

GLORIA

Then home to bed.

SHERRIE

You used to be there too.

GLORIA

Till Pastor Keister kicked me out of the church.

SHERRIE

He didn't kick you out. He just caught you and / Neil Sommers doing it at the Haunted House.

GLORIA

Neil Sommers doing it at the Haunted House. They are just a bunch of judgmental... whatever. Are you going to participate here tonight or do you want me to show you where to get the train home?

SHERRIE

I want to but it just goes against / what I believe.

GLORIA

Don't you believe in fun? Tonight is a special night. Look, we are so close to Times Square, if you lean out you can almost see it. (GLORIA climbs onto the ledge.)

SHERRIE

Careful.

GLORIA

Careful sucks!

(BABY NEW YEAR enters)

BABY

Yo ladies. Anybody got a match? I think my lighter fell out of my diaper.

GLORIA

My purse is downstairs.

SHERRIE

I don't smoke.

(GLORIA gives her a look.)

But I might start tonight. This is my first real New Year's Eve Party.

BABY

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

SHERRIE

So, I want to do this right.

GLORIA

That a girl!

SHERRIE

Ring in the New Year right.

BABY

Sounds great. I'm gonna head down. It's fucking cold.

(OTHERS enter.)

HIRAM

There he is. I told you there was a guy dressed like Baby New Year.

KATE

That takes some balls to dress like that.

HARVEY

I think I can see them!

GLORIA

Good one!

SHERRIE

Yeah, why are you dressed like that?

BABY

I thought it would get me laid. It's NEW YEARS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

SHERRIE

Is that what this is all about?

GLORIA

YES! Finally.

KATE

It is about partying.

HIRAM

And the ball dropping.

BABY

Actually mine are ascending. It's cold out!

HARVEY

Aw, that was my joke!

SHERRIE

So, do you all know each other?

BABY

Nope.

KATE

It's a party. You make new friends.

HIRAM

Don't know anybody here except my friend who passed out in the hall.

KATE

The vomit guy?

HIRAM

He has a name. Can't remember it. But he has a name.

SHERRIE

Our purses are down there.

GLORIA

(To Sherrie) Relax. My friend here has never been to a New Year's Eve Party.

HARVEY

What do you do normally do?

SHERRIE

I usually go to the New Year's Eve service at my church.

(All are silent.)

GLORIA

Yeah, right? Sherrie. Participate.

SHERRIE

Hi. My name is Sherrie! I want to experience a real New Year's Eve Party!!!! (She screams awkwardly. For a really long time.)

GLORIA (Embarrassed.)

Can you believe she's my roommate?

HARVEY

So, let's help her do it right.

HIRAM

Give her a glass.

KATE

Yeah, make a resolution and then toast.

SHERRIE

I don't drink.

(A long SILENCE and then all adlib thing like "What are we going to do?" "I don't know how to respond to this.")

SHERRIE

No, look. I'm here. I made a commitment. I want to experience this but I'm scared. What happens at 12:05 when the TV is turned off?

HARVEY

Well, they aren't saying "I don't drink."

GLORIA

For sure.

SHERRIE

But then, how do you guys reconcile it all—

KATE

Who says "reconcile" at a New Year's Eve Party?

BABY

I don't even know what that means.

SHERRIE

Look, as Christians we have to follow the path / or else we...

HIRAM

Who said we're Christians? / I'm Jewish.

SHERRIE

I just assumed.

KATE

Muslim.

HARVEY

Wiccan.

BABY

Anything that will get me laid.

GLORIA

You get it? You got to loosen up. Not everybody believes what Pastor Kesiter has been feeding us.

SHERRIE

But don't you guys have second thoughts about tonight?

BABY

I haven't even had first thoughts.

KATE

We're just here to have fun.

HIRAM

Yeah, it's New Year's freakin' Eve!

HARVEY

Let's forget all of the shit of last year and focus on next year.

BABY

Amen!

SHERRIE

Rebirth.

KATE

Hey, you gotta make a resolution.

GLORIA

Yeah, Sherrie. Make a resolution.

SHERRIE

I don't think / that's wise...

GLORIA

You wanted to experience a real party. It's tradition.

SHERRIE

But—

BABY

Yeah, my New Year's virgin, what do you resolve to do in next year?

KATE

Great. I gotta hear this.

HARVEY

Yeah, make a vow.

HIRAM

Promise.

GLORIA

In your case, swear to God to change something about yourself.

SHERRIE

Maybe I need to start experiencing things.

GLORIA

Instead of sitting on the sidelines? Love it.

SHERRIE

Yeah, I want to experience things.

KATE

OK, now you gotta toast.

SHERRIE

But—

HARVEY

That is tradition.

BABY

It's true.

HIRAM

Why do they call it toast? Like warm bread?

HARVEY

Good question.

GLORIA

Drunks. Focus. Let my friend, Sherrie, do it all. Sherrie!?

SHERRIE

(Respectively acknowledging the people who said the following...)
My resolution, vow, promise, swear to God—

BABY

Damn, what are you a teacher?

SHERRIE

Yeah, I think that is going to be my major.

GLORIA

You've been undeclared so long. I think that is perfect for you.

SHERRIE

Me too.

BABY

Can we get back to drinking?

SHERRIE

Sorry, yes, my resolution, "To continue to be curious within God's laws."

HIRAM

That is the most lame res—

GLORIA

I like it. Now Sherrie, you have to toast.

BABY

That means drink.

HIRAM

And warm bread.

KATE

Clink glasses.

(They all do. The all drink.)

SHERRIE

What's next?

(An offstage crowd starts the countdown.)

CROWD

Ten

HARVEY

We gotta get down there.

CROWD

Nine.

HIRAM

You got somebody to kiss?

CROWD

Eight.

KATE

You, I guess.

CROWD

Seven.

HARVEY

I wish we could see it from here.

CROWD

Six.

BABY

Please let me get lucky.

(All but SHERRIE and GLORIA exit.)

CROWD

Five.

GLORIA

Come on.

CROWD

Four.

GLORIA

You gotta see the ball drop on TV.

CORWD

Three.

SHERRIE

I've seen that on TV before.

CROWD

Two.

SHERRIE

I'll be down at 12:05

(GLORIA exits.)

CROWD

One. Happy New Year!

(SHERRIE stands on the ledge trying to lean out and see the distant celebration)