

## **Machaca**

### **Pitch**

**Genre:** Satire. “24” meets “The Sleeping Dictionary.”

### **Summary:**

A Mormon missionary goes to Costa Rica and chooses his life over his faith when a prank is played on him by the xenophobic, indigenous villagers that he is proselytizing to. They drug him and lead him to believe that he has been bitten by the love bug, or “Machaca,” and that he must have sex within 24 hours or he will die.

### **Protagonist:**

Elder Salt Stevenson, 19. Tall, blond, with a soft complexion and piercing blue eyes. Wears black suit pants, polished shoes, a white button down shirt, a black tie, and a jacket depending on the weather. He is your typical good Mormon.

### **Central conflict:**

Should Salt choose his life over his faith?

### **Opening:**

Salt Stevenson, 19, stands outside the front door of a suburban house in Utah. The moon is right, the girl is right. She closes her eyes and leans in to kiss him... “I don’t think we should kiss.” He preaches about how the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) recommend that they break up before his two-year mission. He tells her that these are going to be the best two years of his life and that he can’t be distracted. Meanwhile, his identical twin, Lake covers his girlfriend Naloni with kisses and clichés.

### **Synopsis:**

The twins arrive in Costa Rica wearing black suits and white button-down shirts, despite the heat. They are assigned separate missions and part ways. One year later Salt works in San Jose in the water purification program with a Costa Rican partner. They are assigned to go on a mission to a previously out of bounds indigenous reserve, and are told that in addition there will be a nice treat for them. They meet up with a Costa Rican guide and, surprise, his partner Lake who has a laid back attitude about the whole mission. Salt takes it very seriously.

All four of them arrive safely at the tiny village at the base of the mountainous reserve. The two Costa Ricans set out to hike up the rainforest covered mountain to the reserve to make first contact and acquire a couple of the indigenous men to help them carry all of their water purifying supplies up. Salt and Lake guard the equipment and wait. The Costa Rican Mormons never return, leaving the Americans to roast all day and get eaten alive by bugs at night. This is much to the amusement of the village children, especially Julia, a rebellious teenager.

After their tent brakes, Salt and Lake seek the help of a village family: Cili, her ailing husband Esteban, and their beautiful daughter, Lucinda, 17. They are escorted to a currently vacant hut, sometimes occupied by the village's traveling doctor. Cili insists on cooking and cleaning for them as they continue to wait. She accidentally puts Lake's journal in with Salt's things and he discovers certain sexual misconducts with Naloni. Salt threatens to report his brother to the church and mother, causing Lake to have a nervous breakdown and shut down.

Finding himself alone, Salt decides to do what any good Mormon would do and proselytizes to the community. Among the villagers he meets are two men, Andre and his elderly father, Putu who are proponents of a movement for the villagers to return to their indigenous roots. Andre's two children are Julia, the rebellious teenager, and Kenny, an eager-to-please boy. Salt holds a public worship service in the center of the village, peaking the curiosity of Kenny as well as Lucinda. Andre forcibly removes Kenny from the service, warning Salt to stop forcing his outside beliefs on the villagers. After the service, however, Lucinda requests that Salt tell her more. Salt confides in her that Lake had pre-marital and that such an act is considered a sin.

Cili catches them talking together and informs them that the traveling doctor has returned and that they have been moved into her house. That night Cili sends Lucinda to the Doctor's hut with dinner. Salt falls asleep before she returns. Early the next morning as Salt prays by the well, he sees Lucinda walking through the village. She tells him that she asleep so late and up so early because of all of the new ideas that he taught her. Salt sees that the doctor's hut door is open and he goes to meet him. The Doctor suggests that Salt search for the Costa Rican missionaries.

Salt tries to hike to the reserve, but lost and accosted by bugs, he is forced to turn around and head back down to the village. As he returns later that night, he finds a drunken Julia having sex in the woods. She claims that she had to because she was bitten by the Love Bug, or "Machaca," and if she didn't have sex within 24 hours she would die. She proceeds to show him a bug bite on her leg. Salt immediately brings her to her family, Andre and Putu, and tells on her, emphasizing her ridiculous excuse. But on the spur of the moment Putu, angered that Salt is forcing his Mormon values upon his

family and village, agrees with his granddaughter, and Andre goes along with it. Julia compounds the lie by pretending that one of Salt's fresh bug bites looks like the Machaca bite.

Later that night, while Salt is praying outside, a secret meeting is held in Cili's house (Lake overhears the meeting while pretending to be asleep) in which everyone agrees to go in on the trick in order to get rid of the Mormons and deter any future outsiders from entering the indigenous territory, everyone but Lucinda who runs out to find Salt.

*This whole bit involving everyone's role in the trick and how it gets executed needs to be worked out:* Lake impersonates Salt and tells Lucinda that he knows about the trick already and that he loves her (he does this in the hopes that she will sleep with the real Salt and then he will have a means to blackmail him into staying silent about Naloni). Lucinda breaks up with the doctor. Julia tells Salt that Lucinda's been sleeping with the doctor. Cili drugs Salt's food and he hallucinates as a result. Salt goes to the doctor who, because Salt turned Lucinda into a pious woman, confirms the story.

Salt tries to resist his urges, but ultimately decides to have sex with Lucinda. Lucinda, however, won't sleep with him because of what he told her about it being a sin. Salt questions her virtue, now that he knows that she has been sleeping with the doctor. Lucinda throws him out instead of telling him about the trick. So he tries to get together with Julia who toys with him and then refuses. He tries to rape her, and she runs away. Salt chases her into the rainforest and gets lost. He is found in the morning by the Costa Rican Mormons (who were delayed because one of them broke his ankle), dirty, naked, and denouncing God.

### **Ending:**

Back in Utah, Salt is on a date. The moon is right, the girl is right. "Well now that the best two years of your life are over, am I allowed to kiss you?" Beat. "What the Hell."

### **Comedic aspects that lighten an otherwise dark script:**

- being lectured to by Costa Rican Methodists on his spiritual convictions while trying to proselytize to them
- trying to explain to his hostess in the village that he does not drink coffee- a Costa Rican staple
- lecturing his partner on the sin of anal sex
- getting caught masturbating in the village after he believes that he will die