

LIFE-POSTPONED!!

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OUR MAN IN SANTIAGO, Mark Wilding's comic spy thriller about an ill-equipped secret agent recruited by the CIA to lead an attempt in the overthrow of a newly elected leader of a South American banana republic, and the fellow agent to see it all through, makes its world premier at Theatre West of Los Angeles.

The setting is Santiago, Chile c.1973. The government has a socialist president in rule, and a plot is being formed between the US by way of the Nixon administration and the Chilean military police force to overthrow the current leader whose been in power since the beginning of the decade. The agency selected Daniel Baker (Nick McDow Musleh) to lead in the coup. The CIA suspects that he's the man that can execute this dangerous task, but Daniel doesn't seem to be cut out for this mission. Using a suite in one of Santiago's finer hotels as headquarters, he's paired up with fellow agent Jack Wilson (George Tovar) to complete this detail. It's not going to be as easy as it may appear working through a nation that hasn't been on a steady political ground. As the two arrange their scheme, another party becomes involved, Chilean woman Maria (Presciliana Esparolini). She isn't a spy, but the hotel maid! Receiving their cues through sitting American President Richard Nixon (Steve Nevil) and Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger (Michael Van Duzer), both Daniel and Jack unfold their government backed under wraps strategy to complete their mission, no matter how dangerous it may wind up. But what do they know, and how much are they aware of this outcome? And is Maria somebody to consider, or is she really just the clean-up woman?

This new comedy by Mark Wilding was inspired by an actual event where the CIA was involved in an overthrow attempt of President Salvador Allende during the 1973 Chilean coup d'état with the US as a backing force. This play takes those events and forms a comical farce where its leading characters, Daniel Baker as portrayed by Mick McDow Musleh and Jack Wilson as played by George Tovar, are spies without a mission and vice versa. In other words, they are more Maxwell Smart than James Bond! They don't have fancy gadgets or unique schemes to complete their assignments in any way shape or form. All they have are their own wits for what they are worth. The humor embedded is of a fast paced variety and plays out as a very refined sitcom. (The high brow quality sitcom sort!) The thrills that exist are of the leads getting deeper in what not to do in order to keep this nation south of the equator free from a military junta. In fact, the laughs outpace the cunning spy-type thrills as each step leads toward more laff-loaded buffoonery than the standard cloak-and-dagger espionage methods of practice.

Theatre West member Charlie Mount directs this program in a clip that just gets funnier by the moment. Steve Nevil as "Tricky Dick" Nixon with Michael Van Duzer as Henry ("missing") Kissinger are just as comical in this production as they really were in so-called real life back in the day. Those

comical characteristic are most appreciated by those of a certain age (Baby Boomers mostly) who fondly recall those times, especially if one followed the newscasts some forty-five or so years ago when all of these things were taking place!

One space for eye-candy is Jeff G. Rack's set design that shows off the fancy hotel suite located in Chile's national capitol, and the Oval Office where Nixon and Kissinger are taking roost. (The president's desk as depicted on stage is more appealing than the man seated behind the thing!)

It's not often where one can experience a spy thriller play as seen on an intimate stage as Theater West provides. It's really rare to see a comical spy thriller on the same stage set. But OUR MAN IN SANTIAGO fits the bill quite nicely. It's a load of laughs, and no secret code is needed, or even used! Besides, overthrowing a government is so easy, anyone can do it! All it takes is a little know-how!

For more details on revised performance dates, contact Theatre West at (323) 851-7977, or by way of its website at <http://www.TheatreWest.org>
