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Kosher meal

When Do We Eat? captures chaos of full dinner table

By [LIZ BRAUN](#), TORONTO SUN

The wild-eyed chaos of a large family at a large family dinner is captured perfectly in *When Do We Eat?*

The Stuckmans are getting together, most of them reluctantly, for a Passover seder: Dad (Michael Lerner) is a grumpy dictator who runs a Christmas ornament company and Mom (Lesley Ann Warren) is a martyr who has worked overtime to create a perfect seder for their newly religious son, Ethan (Max Greenfield).

The other Stuckman children include son Zeke (Ben Feldman) who is a druggie, Lionel (Adam Lamberg) who appears to be autistic, daughter Jennifer (Meredith Scott Lynn) who has come to dinner with her lesbian partner (Cynda Williams) and daughter Nikki (Shiri Appelby) who is a sex surrogate.

Toss in cousin Vanessa (Mili Avital), a celebrity publicist who sometimes has sex with Ethan, granddad (Jack Klugman), who is sure the Nazis will be back any minute and Rafi (Mark Ivanir), the one-eyed Israeli tent maker who is flirting with mom.

Dad brags, as always, that he runs the world's fastest Passover seder.

Not this time.

After the usual fights over the usual family issues, everything slows down to accommodate Ethan's new religious take on the world. Zeke decides to slip some Ecstasy into dad's drink.

The quibbling escalates into fisticuffs, the autistic son freaks out, the dinner breaks up briefly for a sexual interlude and dad slowly gets more and more stoned.

Thanks to a great cast and sharp writing, *When Do We Eat?* is a clever comedy with plenty of black humour and irreverence, all of which leads to contemplative thought.

By the time Dad starts to hallucinate the spark of God's love around various family members, the message of love and forgiveness is evident beneath the often hysterically funny (and sometimes just hysterical) narrative.

When Do We Eat? covers a lot of ground, and though the laughs are sometimes broad, filmmaker Sal Litvak knows from family dynamics.

And he's sharing.

BOTTOM LINE

When Do We Eat? has won a handful of film festival awards for its universal message about family and the wider world. The film seems to have been a labour of love for the filmmaker and the cast; it's good-hearted material, though you might not want to bring the kids.

WHEN DO WE EAT?

1 hour, 30 minutes

Starring: Michael Lerner, Lesley Ann Warren, Jack Klugman, Meredith Scott Ly

Director: Salvador Litvak

Rated: 14A

PLOT: The wildly dysfunctional Stuckman family gets together for a particularly hostile Passover seder. After sex, drugs -- too bad about dad eating that tab of Ecstasy -- and matzoh, the family finds love and forgiveness almost by mistake.

Sun Rating: 3 out of 5