



The End of the Spear is a compelling story of courage, sacrifice and redemption. This new film is based on the true story of five missionary martyrs to the Auca Indians in Ecuador. It is visually spectacular, filmed in the lush rainforests of Ecuador with monkeys and parrots, bush pigs and sloths, and the feared jaguar and anaconda. The scenery is breathtaking, and the story of how the Gospel came to the savage Waodani tribe is shocking and deeply challenging.

The story is told from the perspective of Steve Saint, the son of missionary pilot, Nate Saint. It is a story of worlds colliding and tragedy striking as a courageous missionary group strives to reach a fierce tribe in a remote part of the Amazon jungle.

The fierceness of the Waodani tribe was legendary. More than half of their people died from spearing. Their violence and aggression had brought the tribe to the brink of extinction. Completely isolated from civilization, the Waodani attacked neighbouring tribes, wiping out all the men and kidnapping the women.

The film begins with a brutal night attack, where men, women, children and even babies are not spared in the brutal massacre.

The year when the 20th Century caught up with the Stone Age tribe Steve Saint was 8 years old and the man who was to kill his father, Mincayani, was about 20 years old. As the Waodani didn't mark time, no one really knew their real age. Mincayani was hunting a jaguar when Nate Saint's bright yellow Piper Cub flew overhead.

“CONTACT! Sector 6!”

Nate Saint radioed back to Shell Mera, the mission base. The Waodani called the aircraft *“a large wood bee.”*

The excitement of the 5 men in the mission team at finally making contact with these feared and fierce Waodani warriors was matched by the apprehension of the wives and children.

Next, Nate Saint and Jim Elliot flew over the Waodani village and, using a bucket attached to a very long line, lowered gifts to the tribe while flying in a tight circle. This was repeated on several occasions in order to establish the good intentions of the team. As the mission team prepared for personal contact on the ground with the Waodani, they were warned to wait for a better time and to contact mission HQ.

Nate Saint responds: *“We don't have two years. The Waodani are killing so many people. The army will come in. We have only one chance to reach these people. This is it!”*

One of the wives warns: *“No one has ever made contact with these people and lived to talk about it.”*

As the men prepare for their mission to the Waodani, eight year old, Steve asks his father, Nate Saint, *“If the Waodani attack, will you defend yourselves? Will you use your guns?”*

Nate responds: *“Son, we can't shoot the Waodani, they are not ready for Heaven. We are!”*

Dayumae, a Waodani woman who had fled from the tribe when she was young, taught the team some Waodani phrases. The 5 missionaries landed on a sand bar. There they set up camp and started to broadcast into the jungle simple phrases in Waodani: *“Do not be afraid of us. The Creator God has sent us.”*

And

“Dayumae is alive!”

Eventually two Waodani women and a man came to see the 5 foreigners. Nate took the man up for a ride in the plane. The mission team is exhilarated. Everything seems to be going according to plan. Contact has been made. The first three Waodani they had interacted with seemed positive.

At this point, a lie sabotages the missionaries' strategy. The Waodani man, Nenkiwi, concocts a lie to tell the other men who had been hunting: *"The foreigners attacked us. We ran. They killed and ate Dayumae!"* The men respond: *"We must spear them!"*

The joy of the missionaries on the sand bar is suddenly shattered as the Waodani warriors run from the jungle and without any warning begin spearing the men. Following behind them the women hack at the fallen men. Despite being armed, the missionaries offer no resistance. They die courageously, fully committed to reaching the Waodani for Christ, trying to communicate their message of God's love to the very end.

A rainstorm erupts. Canoes with armed men searching for the missing missionaries come down the river. A military helicopter comes overhead. Mincayani hiding in the forest expresses the fears of the men: *"We have angered all the spirits!"* They torch their village and flee. Later, Gimade admits that Nenkiwi lied about the foreigners. Nenkiwi is speared. As he lies dying, he demands that his son be killed and buried with him *"Put my son in the earth."* As one of the people asks: *"When does this end?"*

As the wives and children of the 5 missionary martyrs watch the 8mm film recovered on the sand bar, they see the last hours before the tragedy struck. Suddenly, Dayumae exclaims: *"It is my sister!"* She recognises the three that made initial contact with the missionaries on the sand bar. Devastated Dayumae exclaims: *"My family killed your family!"* The cycle of violence that her family had lived in had come around to ensnare her again.

Dayumae and two of the widows then travel to the Waodani. Dayumae is recognised: *"She*

knows our stories!"

Dayumae tells them:

"When I ran to the foreigners, they let me live... Waengongi (the Creator God) marked His trail with carvings – He said that we should not kill. The Wood Bee family (what the Waodani called the white people who came in the plane) can explain these carvings to us."

The Waodani ask: *"Why would these women want to live amongst us after we killed their husbands?"*

The first tentative presentation of the Gospel to the Waodani is given in these words: *"Waengongi had a Son. He was speared but He didn't spear back so that the people spearing Him would live well."*

The first warrior to be converted, Kimu, breaks the spears and starts to build a house of worship. The Waodani men are stunned: *"The women are changing...you no longer know your family."*

More family members of the martyred missionaries arrive at the Waodani village. Steve Saint is initially described as: *"A girl with short hair."* As he describes it: *"According to tradition, as the elder son, I was responsible for avenging my father's death. I remember thinking that I irritated Mincayani."*

As warfare erupts between the Waodani and a neighbouring tribe, Mincayani declares: *"We will not be weak. We will kill."*

Kimu responds:

"I will not kill. I will follow Waengongi's carvings, I will walk His trail."

While the warriors are off on a raid, the neighbouring tribe attacks. Steve asks:

"Are we going to run?"

His aunt Rachel (Nate Saint's elder sister) responds simply:

"No!"

But then the attacking tribe becomes too weak to attack. Some are already dead. More are dying. The Christians amongst the Waodani take in the sick attackers. They radio for help: *"We have an emergency. They have polio."*

The village has to be quarantined.

"Tell everyone to pray."

Mincayani responds ominously: *"Kimu brings our enemies to our spears."* Mincayani begins killing off all the animals and destroying the food supply near the village.

"If they have no food they will starve."

The missionaries radio for air drops of food and medicines. A giant anaconda snake pulls a little girl into the river.

Mincayani is terrified that this new message will make the Waodani weak. *"Spearing makes us strong!"* According to

Waodani belief if they are not strong enough to

"jump the great boa"

at death, they will become a termite forever.

"To die is nothing, to jump the great boa is everything. We will all be termites forever!"

He is warned: *"If you kill again – you will kill us all!"* The cycle of violence moves to a dramatic climax. Nate Saint's sister, Rachel, decides to spend the rest of her life with the Waodani. The Gospel is translated into Waodani. Rachel is eventually buried with the Waodani who she considered her family. Mincayani opens up to Steve Saint and tells him:

"Your father was a special man – I saw him jump the great boa while he was still alive. I speared your father. There is more you need to know. We saw them. Your father saw them too. Shining ones!"

They had seen angels appear after they had speared the missionaries.

Steve Saint responds to Mincayani is grief and guilt: *"No one took my father's life – he gave it."*

At the conclusion of the film, Steve Saint notes that for the first time in Waodani history they have grandfathers.

In 1995, Steve Saint moved to live with the Waodani tribe. He noted: *"Over the years, many have sympathized with our loss, but they could never have imagined our gain."*

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the grounds and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.” John 12:24 – 26

The End of the Spear presents a never to be forgotten picture of the utter depravity and lostness of a tribe before they received the Gospel. It is a powerful story of how the love of Christ inspired families left husbandless and fatherless. They risked everything to ensure that the Waodani warriors who had so violently taken their fathers, husbands and brother could receive the life transforming Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for another.” John 15:13

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