



SEMAINE
DE LA CRITIQUE
CANNES 2015

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "EL ESTUDIANTE"

PAULINA

DOLORES
FONZI

CRISTIAN
SALGUERO

ESTEBAN
LAMOHE and

OSCAR
MARTÍNEZ

A FILM BY SANTIAGO MITRE



SYNOPSIS

Paulina abandons her successful career as a lawyer in Buenos Aires to engage in social activism back in her homeland on the border between Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil. After two weeks working in a neighborhood scarred by marginalization, she is assaulted by a gang. Despite the brutality of the attack, instead of fleeing, Paulina resolves to hold tighter to her convictions - to survive, against the odds.

PAULINA is a social thriller that explores the characters connected to an act of violence - the victims and the perpetrators - and examines how that violence triggers different ideas of justice.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I hadn't seen the original version of *La Patota* (1961), directed by Daniel Tinayre and starring Mirtha Legrand, until I was asked to adapt it. I watched the movie once and decided that was it. I didn't want to see it again. It was enough. Something about Paulina's character slapped me in the face, really troubled me. From the beginning, I wrote with Paulina in mind, trying to understand her. I quickly realized it was impossible: Paulina didn't have to be understood, and that was exactly what interested me about making the movie. Being able to follow her, to be with her, to think with her, but not trying to understand her. Not locking her up with explanations. Paulina is pushed by a survival drive that borders the irrational, and it's this force that pushes the movie, dragging us with it. The other main character, not so present in the original, that became central for me is the father, Judge Fernando Vidal. A liberal judge, open-minded, with an extensive political background and strong convictions, who has raised and modeled his daughter according to himself. It's between those two points of view - father-daughter, lawyer-judge, woman-man - that the central topics of the movie hide and develop: justice, marginality, existentialism, gender violence, the criminal justice system, social class, forgiveness.

The original version explored the idea of forgiveness through moral parameters that were very close to religion. I'm not interested in religion, but realized I could work with the main issues of *La Patota* from

another perspective, and try to build a fable in which political convictions are central. I filled the place occupied by religion in the original with another type of belief: ideology. How far can social convictions take you? What are the limits of ideology?

With these questions, Paulina embarks on a personal search: it is hers alone, like the pain of what she endured. What links her to other women who went through similar violence is the same painful question: how does one survive this?

Some years ago, I made a movie called *El Estudiante*, in which I worked with a character who believed in nothing, a pragmatist who moved forward without asking why things happen. Somehow, *Paulina* is on the opposite side of that movie, maybe a complementary opposite. Paulina does believe... she thinks things through, knows why she does what she does, and that's certainty what generates drama. In *El Estudiante* as in *Paulina*, characters transform, flip entirely. And in both, there's a will to examine political worlds (societies) from a contemporary perspective.

One of the challenges *Paulina* presents us with is how to respect decisions with which we don't agree. It's easy to respect decisions we would also make, but almost impossible to try to understand what we believe to be wrong. Why does Paulina decide what she decides? What is she looking for? What does she

want to prove? We asked ourselves these things often at each stage of the film, and we're still wondering now, as I hope the viewer will. It's difficult to find an answer, to interpret her decision... as difficult as it is to interpret the violence that caused it, in a divided world where institutions can barely serve as containment, a world which finds it impossible to supply answers, and where violence erupts either with or without an obvious cause.

What can cinema do in connection with all this? Very little, probably nothing. Just feed images, create fictions, make ideas concrete, raise questions... In other words, construct the territory from where we can watch, and start a thread of thought. Maybe that amounts to something.

Santiago Mitre.





DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

SANTIAGO MITRE was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1980. He studied at the Universidad del Cine (FUC).

In 2004, he co directed with Alejandro Fadel, Martin Mauregui, and Juan Schnitman, **EL AMOR (1ª PARTE) (Love, part one)**, feature presented at BAFICI and Settimana Internazionale della Critica in Venice.

In 2006 he started to write for film and television.

He wrote three features for Pablo Trapero: *Leonera* (Cannes' Competition - 2008), *Carancho* (Un Certain Regard - 2010) and *Elefante Blanco* (Un Certain Regard - 2012).

He wrote with Israel Caetano and Walter Salles, among other directors.

In 2011, he cofounded the independent production company LA UNIÓN DE LOS RÍOS, producer of his first feature, **EL ESTUDIANTE (The Student)**. The film participated in more that 30 festivals harvesting numerous awards such as Locarno's Special Jury Prize/Cineasti del Presente, Best Film in Gijón and Cartagena, FIPRESCI Best Argentinean film 2011.

In April 2013 he presented at BAFICI the medium length film **LOS POSIBLES**, codirected with Juan Onofri Barbato, a cross over work between film and stage, between camera and dance.

LA PATOTA (Paulina) is his second feature as writer and director.

FILMOGRAPHY

2015 **LA PATOTA (Paulina)**

Cannes Critics Week

2006 **EL ESTUDIANTE (The Student)**

Festival Del Film Locarno - Special Jury Prize, Toronto International Film Festival, BFI London Film Festival, BAFICI - Special Prize of the Jury & Best Cinematography

2004 **EL AMOR (1ª PARTE) (Love, part one) - (collective)**

BAFICI, Venice International Critics Week





**ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, FRANCE | 2015 | DRAMA | SPANISH
COLOUR / 2.35:1 / DOLBY DIGITAL / 103'**

Original title : La Patota

Director : Santiago Mitre

Screenplay : Santiago Mitre & Mariano Llinás.

Production : La Unión de los Ríos, Full House

Producers : Agustina Llambi Campbell, Fernando Brom, Santiago Mitre, Lita Stantic, Didar Domehri,
Laurent Baudens, Gaël Nouaille, Axel Kuschevatzky, Walter Salles, Ignacio Viale

Production Director : Giselle Lozano

Cinematographer : Gustavo Biazzi

Editor : Delfina Castagnino, Leandro Aste, Joana Collier

Art Director/production design : Micaela Saiegh

Sound : Santiago Fumagalli, Federico Esquerro, Edson Secco

Music : Nicolás Varchausky

Costumes : Florencia Caligiuri & Carolina Sosa Loyola

Cast : Dolores Fonzi

Oscar Martínez

Esteban Lamothe

Cristian Salguero

Verónica Llinás

Laura López Moyano

Ezequiel Díaz

Andrea Quattrocchi

Silvina Savater



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