

The Mexican Film Bulletin

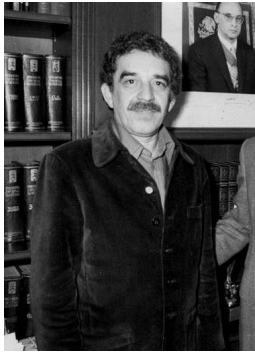
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Obituaries

Gabriel García Márquez

Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel García Márquez died of cancer on 17 April 2014 in Mexico. Gabriel José de la Concordia García Márquez was born in Colombia in March 1927. Although he originally planned to study law, García Márquez turned to literature and published his first story in 1947. He worked as a newspaper reporter and film critic while writing stories and novels. His work took him around the world; he relocated to Mexico in the early 1960s and became involved with the film industry there, while continuing his literary efforts. García Márquez subsequently lived in Spain and Colombia, although he later left his native land for political reasons. Diagnosed with cancer in 1999 (and then, in 2012, with dementia), García Márquez maintained his writing career: his last book was published in 2010.



García Márquez's stories and novels were adapted to films in Mexico and elsewhere, but he also worked on the screenplays of a number of pictures himself. His most prolific period in Mexico was in the mid-Sixties, when he wrote or co-wrote the scripts for *El gallo de oro*, *Lola de mi vida*, *Tiempo de morir*, *Juego peligroso*, and *Cuatro contra el crimen*. He also taught screenwriting at the Centro de Estudios Cinematográficas in Mexico City, and later in Cuba.

In the 1970s García Márquez received Arieles for writing *Presagio* (with Luis Alcoriza) and *El año de la peste* (shared with Juan Arturo Brennan). He also later contributed to the screenplays for *María de mi corazón*, *Eréndira*, and *Edipo Alcalde*. In 1999, Arturo Ripstein, who made his directorial debut with *Tiempo de morir* (1965), adapted García Márquez's novella "El coronel no tiene quien le escriba," the final Mexican film to bear the author's name.

Jorge Arvizu

Actor/voice artist Jorge Arvizu, nicknamed "El Tata," died of heart trouble on 18 March 2014. Jorge Isaac

Arvizu Martínez was born in the state of Guanajuato in July 1933. After relocating to Mexico City as a teenager, Arvizu held a number of positions on the margins of the entertainment industry, from clown to magician's assistant to cabaret performer. In the 1950s he began to work as a voice artist on the *Tele Revista* shorts, then moved into dubbing animated cartoons, sitcoms and theatrical films into Spanish. These included "Howdy Doody," "Bugs Bunny," "Mr. Magoo," "The Flintstones," "Top Cat," "Get Smart," "The Simpsons," "Lost in Space," *The Godfather*, *Cars*, etc.

Arvizu also appeared frequently as an actor on the stage, on Mexican-produced television programs, and in the cinema. His film credits include roles in *Persíguelas y...alcánzalas!*, *La mafia amarilla*, *La gran aventura del Zorro*, *Los cargadores*, *Don Gato y su pandilla* (a feature animated film based on the "Top Cat" series), and his last, *Fachon models* (released in 2014).



Valeria Pani

Actress Valeria Pani, whose real name was Alma Rosa Corral Garcia, died on 12 March 2014 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, apparently during a robbery attempt. Pani was born in Mexico in 1957, and first entered show business in the 1970s as a *vedette* (showgirl). She appeared in two Mexican films, *El patrullero 777* with Cantinflas, and *A fuego lento*. She subsequently moved to South America, where she worked in



the Olmedo-Porcel comedy *Amante para dos*. [She apparently also appeared in *El ojo de la tormenta*, 1987, an unreleased feature.]

Valeria Pani was the sister of actress Mayté Carol, and thus the aunt of Carol's actress daughter Valeria Palmer. Pani married Paraguayan impresario Alfredo Samaniego and they had one son, Alfredo Steffano, a tango singer and dancer.

Antonio Morales “Junior”

Spanish singer Antonio Morales Barretto, known professionally as “Junior,” was found dead in his home outside of Madrid on 15 April 2014. Morales, 70 years of age, presumably passed away of natural causes, since he had been suffering from ill health for several years.

Born in the Philippines in September 1943, Morales moved to Spain as a teenager and became a member of various popular musical groups, including the “Spanish Beatles,” Los Brincos. He and



fellow Brinco Juan Pardo later formed the duo “Juan y Junior,” before Morales went out on his own as a solo artist. Morales was married to singer-actress Rocío Durcal from 1970 to her death in 2006; they had three children.

Morales co-starred with Fanny Cano in the Mexican-Spanish coproduction *Los jóvenes amantes* (1970), as well as in a handful of Spanish movies and—in the 1980s—several Filipino films.



Ariel Nominations

The 2014 Ariel Awards will be held at the Palacio de Bellas Artes on 27 May 2014. Lifetime Achievement Arieles de Oro will be presented to director Arturo Ripstein and actor Ernesto Gómez Cruz. The ceremony will also contain tributes to María Félix and José Revueltas.

Best Film nominations went to: *La jaula de oro*, *Heli*, *Los insólitos peces gatos*, *Club Sándwich*, and *No quiero dormir sola*. 17 fictional features received one or more nominations, led by *Heli* (14), *La jaula de oro* (14), *Tercera llamada* (8), *Los insólitos peces gatos* (7), and *Workers* and *Ciudadano Buelna* (6 each). The only category with no nominations was Best Feature-Length Animated Film.

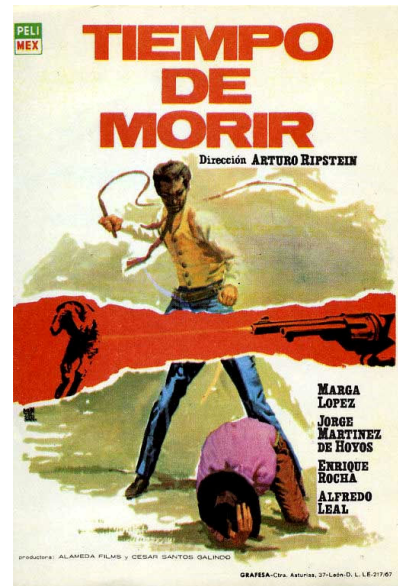


Gabriel García Márquez Scripts

Tiempo de morir [Time to Die] (Alameda Films-César Santos Galindo, 1965) *Prod*: Alfredo Ripstein Jr.; *Dir*: Arturo Ripstein; *Adapt-Dialog*: Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes; *Story*: Gabriel García Márquez; *Photo*: Alex Phillips; *Music*: Carlos Jiménez Mabarak; *Prod Chief*: Enrique Morfin; *Asst Dir*: Ignacio Villareal; *Film Ed*: Carlos Savage; *Art Dir*: Salvador Lozano; *Decor*: Pablo Galván; *Camera Op*: José Antonio Zamora; *Lighting*: A. González; *Makeup*: Concepción Zamora; *Sound Supv*: James L. Fields; *Dialog Rec*: Jesús González Gancy; *Music/Re-rec*: Galdino Samperio; *Sound Ed*: Reynaldo Portillo; *Union*: STPC

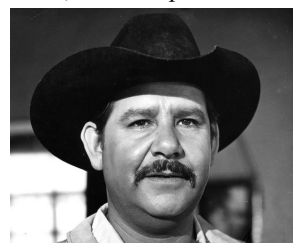
Cast: Marga López (*Mariana Sampedro*), Jorge Martínez de Hoyos (*Juan Sáyo*), Enrique Rocha (*Pedro*

Trueba), Alfredo Leal (*Julián Trueba*), Blanca Sánchez (*Sonia*), Tito Junco (*comisario*), Quintín Bulnes (*Diego Martín Ibáñez*), Miguel Maciá (*druggist*), Carlos Jordán (*Casildo*), Arturo Martínez (*cantinero*), Hortencia [sic] Santoveña (*Rosita*), Carolina Barret (*Sonia's mother*), Manuel Dondé (*barber*), Claudio Isaac (*Claudio Sampedro*), Leonardo Castro (*gravedigger*), Cecilia Leger (*housekeeper*), Chabelo Jiménez (*blacksmith*), Luz Ma. Velázquez (*nana*), Adolfo Lara & Alfredo Chavira (*guards*), Alfredo Ripstein Jr., Alberto Isaac, Lucero Isaac, Emilio García Riera



Notes: Looking back from today’s perspective, one would expect great things from a film directed by Arturo Ripstein, one of the best Mexican directors of the past 40 years, and written by two of the most famous contemporary Latin American writers of that period, Gabriel García Márquez and Carlos Fuentes. But *Tiempo de morir* is actually just a decent Western, with nothing particularly marvelous about it.

This was 21-year-old Ripstein’s first feature (his father was producer Alfredo Ripstein Jr. and Arturo had literally grown up around Mexico’s movie studios)—in the future he would refine his technique and make many impressive films, but *Tiempo de morir* can be a bit of a let-down if



one approaches it with one’s expectations set too high.

Juan leaves prison after 18 years and returns to his hometown, where he discovers his house has fallen into ruins (in an amusing scene, he tries to unlock the front door, but the lock is jammed, so he kicks the door down, revealing that only the front wall of the house is still standing—there is no roof, and a cow is grazing “inside!”). His ex-girlfriend, Mariana, has been married, had a son, and is now a widow, and his former employer is dead. Everyone Juan meets urges him to leave town before the two grown sons of the man he shot learn he has come back.

The sons are Pedro and Julián Trueba, who grew up believing Juan ambushed their father and shot him in the back. Julián wants to kill Juan, but Juan—who carries no pistol—refuses to face him. Pedro, engaged to marry Sonia, is pressured by his fiancée to leave Juan alone. Furthermore, Pedro comes to realise that Juan is a decent

man who killed his father in a fair fight, in self-defense. When Pedro stands up for Juan, Julián savagely beats him with a belt.

Finally, Juan can be pushed no further (Julián repeatedly challenges him and also wrecked Juan's house, which the older man had been reconstructing), and agrees to meet Julián outside of town, at his father's grave. There, Juan beats Julián to the draw and kills him in a



duel. Pedro witnesses the gunfight, picks up his brother's pistol, and demands Juan face him. Juan refuses, unbuckling his gunbelt and dropping it on the ground. Enraged, Pedro shoots Juan three times in the back. Juan falls dead on Pedro's father's grave.

Tiempo de morir contains at least one overt visual reference to John Ford's *The Searchers*. Emilio García Riera (who has a cameo role in the movie) compares



Juan's need to wear eyeglasses (he puts them on to see his watch, and wears them in his gunfight with Julián)

with Joel McCrea's similar failing eyesight in Peckinpah's *Ride the High Country* (1962), although it's also possible this is an *homage* to Ford's *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949), in which John Wayne's character pulls out glasses to read.

It's interesting to note García Márquez's original story was written to be filmed as a dramatic *ranchera* but, given the prevailing tastes of the moment, was changed to a traditional Western. Indeed, there are even a few minor stylistic touches reminiscent of spaghetti Westerns, although this may be pure coincidence, since that genre was not yet widely popular internationally. Colombian director Jorge Ali Triana remade *Tiempo de morir* in 1986 (he would later collaborate with García Márquez on *Edipo Alcalde*), as a more-or-less contemporary film set in a Colombian village.

The performances are all satisfactory or better. Jorge Martínez de Hoyos is particularly good, especially considering he might seem to be one of the last actors one would think of as a Western hero. He did play leading roles in numerous films from the mid-Fifties until the late Sixties (after which he moved into character parts), but was more often cast as a somewhat pudgy Everyman. Alfredo Leal, whose transition from professional bullfighter to actor was just beginning, is adequate as the bad Trueba, and Enrique Rocha is alright as his more reasonable brother. Marga López, top-billed for box-office reasons, seems a little miscast but does the best she can

with a role that feels somewhat sterile. As noted earlier, critic Emilio García Riera has a cameo part, along with the director's father Alfredo Ripstein Jr., future director Alberto Isaac, and Isaac's wife Lucero and son Claudio. Production values are fine.



Juego peligroso [Dangerous Game] (César Santos Galindo--Nacional Cinematográfica, 1966) *Prod*: Alfredo Ripstein Jr.; *Dir*: Arturo Ripstein (#1), Luis Alcoriza (#2); *Scr*: Gabriel García Márquez (#1), Luis Alcoriza (#2); *Additional Dialog*: Jorge Ibargüengoitia, Francisco Córdova (#1); *Story*: Luis Alcoriza, Fernando Galiana (#2); *Photo*: Guillermo Angulo (#1), Rosalío Solano (#2); *Music*: Nacho Méndez, Dorival Gaymami (#1), Tamba Trío (#2); *Prod Chief*: Domingos Paron, Antonio Cursati; *Film Ed*: Carlos Savage Jr.; *Asst Dir*: Javier Carreño (#1), Mario Cisneros (#2); *Camera Op*: Helio Silva (#1), Carlos Montaña (#2); *Unit Chief*: Marcelino Pacheco, Marcelino Iniestra; *Asst Ed*: Sigfrido García; *Sound Ed*: Reynaldo Portillo; *Makeup*: Armando Meyer

Cast: "H.O." (#1)--Julissa (*Claudia*), Fernando Vilar (*Homero Olmos*), Annik Malvil (*Homero's wife*), Jefferson Dantas (*Luis*), Attila de Almeida (*agent*), Embaixador (*policeman*), Ademir Benevento (*lifeguard*), Antonio y Celso Dresjan (*Homero's sons*); "Divertimiento" (#2)--Silvia Pinal (*Lena Anderson*), Milton Rodrigues (*Mario*), Eva Wilma (*Lucía*), Diana Azambuje, Leila Diniz (*maid*), Nederson Suita, Ricardo Luna, Klever Trabber

Notes: Given the language difference, it's not unusual that there have been relatively few Mexican-Brazilian coproductions, despite the long cinematic histories of both nations. Additionally, unlike numerous citizens of nearly every other Latin American country, relatively few Brazilian performers or film personnel worked in Mexican cinema. According to Arturo Ripstein (quoted in García Riera), *Juego peligroso* came about because money owed



to the César Santos Galindo company was "frozen" in Brazil (a number of countries had restrictions on currency exportation); these funds

could be used to produce a film, however, which would subsequently be "exported." A willing Brazilian co-producer was found, and the project went forward.

Juego peligroso consists of two distinct stories with no narrative connection between them (both are humorous "crime" stories, that's about it), with different casts and crews, and were shot at different times. Each section has one Mexican performer but the rest of the performers were Brazilian, requiring the film to be post-dubbed into Spanish (both Julissa and Silvia Pinal dubbed their own

dialogue), which makes the film slightly annoying to watch and listen to.

"H.O."--famous ad man Homero, driving to Rio de



Janeiro to visit his family, spots a stranded car alongside the highway. He stops to assist: Luis says he and Claudia (who's wearing a wedding gown) were on their way to be married. Since he is waiting for the tow truck, Luis asks Homero to drive Claudia to the

city. Homero and Claudia reach her house safely, but a series of bizarre accidents prevent him from leaving promptly: a broken faucet causes a flood, a fishtank overflows, Homero is covered in blue paint, then uses hair dye instead of shampoo and turns blonde. The water tank is now empty so he and Claudia (who has changed into a polka dot bikini) visit the beach to try and wash his hair, but Homero spots his wife and two sons approaching and has to feign drowning to avoid them. Returning to Claudia's house, Homero tries once more to leave but Claudia says she's been trying to seduce him all day. Giving in to her advances, Homero is then shocked when Luis bursts in and takes a photograph of the couple: the whole day was part of an elaborate blackmail plot. Homero is forced to write a check and hand over his ring, watch, etc., before he is allowed to rejoin his family (which he does, in ill-humour). As the episode concludes, Luis and Claudia are back on the side of the highway, entrapping another victim.

"H.O." is only sporadically amusing. Homero carries a tape recorder into which he spouts various advertising slogans as they occur to him, and is proud of his celebrity status (he appears on television and is known as the "Voice of Experience").

He's slightly self-important, but is generally an amiable fellow and not a predatory lecher (he casts occasional glances at Claudia's impressive cleavage, but at no time even flirts with her), so his treatment by Luis and Claudia seems a little cruel: he doesn't deserve to be blackmailed, and they aren't likeable enough to root for, either.

Leonardo Vilar, who slightly resembles actor Carlos Rotzinger, is generally good in his role, although the dubbing detracts from his performance. Julissa looks good and also performs adequately, while the rest of the cast has little or nothing to do but handle their minor roles in a satisfactory manner. The script has a very few good lines



and situations, but the whole episode is very superficial and doesn't even have a true ironic twist, with the whole blackmail premise seeming forced and illogical (the sheer logistics of all the "accidents" in Claudia's house--just to keep Homero from leaving--would be very daunting to carry out, for one thing). Trivia note: Gabriel García Márquez named Homero's sons after his own children.

Production values are fine, although there is very little Brazilian flavour to the story. There is one rather jarring montage featuring shots of downtown Rio which looks almost like stock footage; the large closeup of the Aerolíneas Peruanas office is explained by the end credits, which indicates this company provided transportation for the filmmakers.

"Divertimiento"--wealthy Lena Anderson is bored with her life. She's having an affair with Mario, and they have concocted a plan to murder his wife Lucia. But Lucia and Mario are actually going to fake her death, then blackmail Lena to get themselves out of debt. The three go out on Lena's boat, and Lucia is knocked out preparatory to being tossed overboard, trussed to an anchor. Mario is stunned when Lena takes a crowbar and smashes the unconscious Lena's head, killing her "so the poor thing won't suffer" being drowned. Her corpse is heaved into the sea. Mario gets over his wife's death, helped by Lena's lusty reaction to murder and the expensive gift she subsequently provides to him.



Mario tries to carry out the blackmail scheme on his own; Lena thinks a private detective working for her father is the instigator, and runs over the man with her car. She and the nonplussed Mario take the body to the same spot off the coast and dump it there. Lena subsequently kills several policemen, her sexy maid and a gardener, and an acquaintance of hers, each time reacting passionately with Mario after the corpses are weighted down with anchors (Lena buys them in bulk) and tossed into the water.

A distraught Mario confesses to a priest, who tells him "the evil weed must be uprooted." Mario protests to Lena, saying they must surrender themselves, but Lena poisons him instead. As he dies, he pulls a pistol and mortally wounds her. The dying Lena kisses him.

"Divertimiento" is about twice as long as "H.O." and while this is stretching a rather thin story a bit longer than justified (Ripstein told García Riera the original film was to consist of three separate stories, one to be directed by Sergio Véjar, but this plan was dropped), the episode is



reasonably entertaining. Mario is easily led by Lena, and her generosity and carnality keep him in line until the body count has increased significantly (and Lena has plans for

many more murders). Lena is amoral, feeling she is above the law, although in one scene she uses the old "one death makes you a murderer, a thousand deaths make you a hero" excuse. There's no indication she had killed anyone before Lucia, but once she realises she gets sexual excitement from committing these crimes, she



finds any excuse to commit more.

Milton Rodrigues had been appearing in Brazilian films since the early 1960s. While *Juego peligroso* didn't pay dividends immediately, by 1970 Rodrigues had relocated to Mexico, where he worked steadily in films and on television until the mid-1980s, when he apparently returned to his homeland and resumed his acting career (although he continued to occasionally act in Mexican

films into the 1990s).

He's adequate here as the handsome but weak-willed Mario. Silvia Pinal is effective as the murderous Lena--displaying just as much cleavage as Julissa did in the first episode--while everyone else is satisfactory. One name in the cast probably not



familiar to Mexican film audiences is Leila Diniz, who has a flashy part in *Juegos peligrosos* as Lena's sexy maid (and eventual murder victim). Diniz was a popular and controversial Brazilian actress (married to director Domingos de Oliveira and, later, to director Ruy Guerra). Diniz died tragically in an airplane crash in 1972, and was even the subject of a subsequent film biography in 1987.

Juego peligroso is one of the lesser films in the filmographies of all involved—Silvia Pinal, Arturo Ripstein, Gabriel García Márquez, and Luis Alcoriza--but it's not a spectacularly bad movie, just a routine one, of interest primarily for its Brazilian connection.



More Juan Orol

Historia de un gangster [Story of a Gangster] (Caribbean Films-Prods. Orol, 1969) *Prod-Dir-Scr*: Juan Orol; *Photo*: Agustín Jiménez; *Music Dir*: Chucho Rodríguez; *Prod Mgr*: Paco del Busto; *Asst Dir*: José Prieto; *Film Ed*: Alfredo Rosas Priego; *Asst Ed*: Ramón Aupart; *Camera Op*: Manuel Santaella; *Sound Engin*: Tito Martínez; *Sound Ed*: Abraham Cruz; *Re-rec*: Salvador Topete; *Makeup*: Benjamín Rivera; Eastmancolor; Union: STPC

Cast: Juan Orol (*Tony Florino*), Dinorah Judith (*Alicia*), César del Campo (*Charles Preston*), Velda González (*Sonia Anderson*), Manolo Villamil (*Luis Esmartin aka Benny Profaci*), Luis Medina, Vicente Vázquez (*Patterson, police chief of Thompsonville*), Estela de la Lastra (*?Lilián Sheridan*), Rafael Plaza, Felipe de Flores (*Mike Miranda*, gangster), Victor Santini, Luis Vera, Luis Alberto Martínez (*police chief*), Ada Soto, José Antonio Ayala, Lolita Berrio, Consuelo L.



De Marcos, Félix Antelo, Víctor Garrís, Julio Torresoto, Juan Pego, Horacio Olivo, Benjamín Lebrón, Norma Acevedo, Nicolás Díaz, Rafael Rosa, José López, Antonio González, Carlos Augusto, Andrés Vázquez, José Montilla, Jorge Vázquez, Paco del Busto (*police official*)

Notes: *Historia de un gangster* was the last film both directed by and starring Juan Orol. His subsequent directorial efforts used other leading men, and his future acting roles were mostly for other directors. A sequel to *Organización criminal*, *Historia de un gangster* more closely resembles *Antesala de la silla eléctrica*, with Orol

cast as a detective rather than a criminal. Aside from a jaw-dropping "twist" ending, *Historia de un gangster* is a relatively competent pastiche of traditional private-eye movies, complete with red herrings and femmes fatales.



After 6 years in prison, gangster Tony Florino is released from custody: he repeatedly makes it clear he didn't snitch in exchange for a reduced sentence, but was given time off for good behaviour. He opens a private detective agency and invites showgirl Lilián Sheridan to move in with him, "if you behave yourself, later we'll get married." But Tony returns from a case to discover Lilián in the bedroom with another man, and gives her the heave-ho. She sends him a letter vowing revenge.

Six more years apparently pass (at one point Tony re-reads Lilián's letter, dated "1963," so that would be the date he got out of prison, and six more years would make it 1969, the film's date of production). Tony had invested money with an inventor, and this has finally paid off: the man's invention (a device that prevents crashes if an auto suffers a tire blowout) has been purchased by another company. The man goes to "Thompsonville" to collect the payment. [Up to this point, the film has been set in New York.] Thompsonville looks a lot like Miami, to tell the

truth. Tony's partner is found dead in his hotel room, and the \$200,000 he was paid for his invention is missing.

[In a confusing scene, Tony meets with a police official and is given permission to investigate the case, since "the police are too busy." However, it is unclear who this official is and where he works—the police chief of "Thompsonville" is another man entirely, who clashes with Tony later.]

Tony goes to Thompsonville and learns a woman who gave her name as "Lilián Sheridan" was in the hotel when his partner was murdered. He also discovers the town's rackets are being run by Luis Esmartin [well, that's how everyone pronounces it], who is actually Benny



Profaci, a gangster Tony knew from the old days. Tony tries to track down Lilián, but a man who claims to have information is gunned down as he and Tony walk down the street. Reporter Sonia Anderson appears and offers to assist Tony. Also involved somehow is Alicia, a dancer at the "La Farándula" nightclub, who has ties to the Esmartin mob: henchman Marcelo Capote (no relation to Truman) is in love with her. Meanwhile, Tony is harassed by corrupt police chief Patterson, but turns the tables and offers the policeman the chance to be a "hero" if he backs off.

Esmartin's men beat up Tony, but one of them sells him Lilián's address: it's a cemetery. She was the unfaithful wife of Esmartin, and died the day after Tony's friend was killed. Alicia is murdered before she can give



Tony some vital information. Tony confronts Esmartin and shoots him to death. Esmartin's henchman Charles Preston has the stolen \$200,000—Sonia lures him to her house and notifies Tony, who

arrives and kills the man, recovering the cash for his partner's wife and children. Marcelo Capote shows up and the plot is unraveled: Sonia was the woman who posed as Lilián and helped Esmartin murder the inventor. She also killed Alicia. Tony leaves Marcelo and Sonia in the house, tossing a pistol on the floor between them. They mortally wound each other.

Some time later, the police discover Tony's body in an abandoned spot on the shore. They say his gangster past caught up with him. Wait, what?

The twist ending of *Historia de un gangster* is a complete surprise. In the previous scene, Tony turns over the money to his partner's widow, and will presumably resume his private detective career. The discovery of his

body is not set up or foreshadowed in any way, and seems really pointless rather than "tragic" or "ironic."

It appears the majority of *Historia de un gangster* was shot in Florida and/or Puerto Rico, aside from some New York stock footage that appears underneath the opening credits. The production credits are basically identical to



Organización criminal, filmed in Puerto Rico, while *Antesala de la silla eléctrica* (made in Florida) has most of the same names, but not all (for example, *Antesala* has a different camera operator, lighting technician, and makeup artist, and studio owner Luke Moberly gets

credit for the sets). The cast is composed largely of Puerto Ricans, but that also goes for both U.S. and Puerto Rican-licensed productions.

It's curious why Orol chose the name "Thompsonville" for his fictitious crime-ridden city: it sounds more like a small town, whereas in the movie itself it is clearly a rather large, near-tropical city (with palm trees along the streets). [Note: there are several places named Thompsonville in the USA, most of them in the north, however.]

Historia de un gangster borrows standard detective/crime movie motifs. Tony's desire to avenge his dead partner and the "reveal" of Sonia (who pursues Tony romantically throughout the film, although he remains cool to her) as a villain are reminiscent of *The Maltese Falcon*, for instance. As with many filmic detectives, Tony is a babe magnet, attracting the much younger Lilián, Alicia, and Sonia with no effort on his part. He's also tough and clever, and good with a hard-boiled quip.

The film is reasonably coherent and competent, although it still contains some of Orol's stylistic trademarks, such as long dialogue scenes and telephone conversations, footage of Orol sitting at desks, in a bar, or a restaurant, and—a relatively recent addition to his bag of tricks—scenes that end with a character walking straight at the camera until their body blocks the lens, thus cueing a cut.

The performances are generally good, if occasionally theatrical. Velda González lays on the Puerto Rican accent

rather thickly and has to work with a script that makes her appear very suspicious from the outset. Dinorah Judith is more naturalistic, and gets to do two dance numbers: one, a modified strip-tease, in which she wears a



domino mask, and another that combines Spanish music and castañets with ballerina slippers and *en pointe* toe dancing. Orol is his usual stoic self and wears his familiar bow-tie and fedora outfit, but is actually perfectly

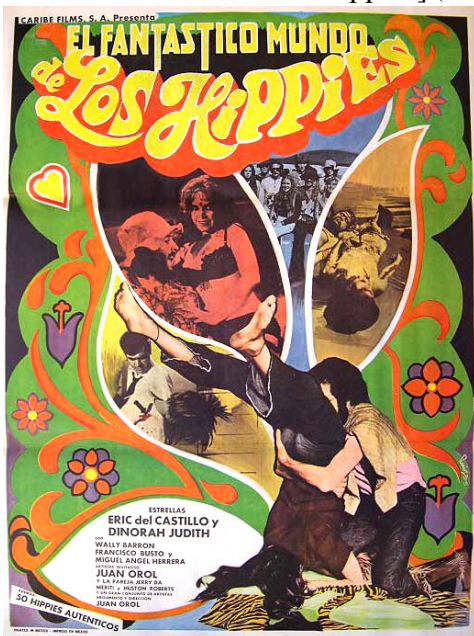
acceptable in the role. Some of the supporting players were obviously more at ease on the stage or other venues rather than in film--"taking" the scenes rather broadly--but no one is really poor.

Production values are satisfactory, with no serious technical gaffes (aside from the fact that blanks were not used--except in one isolated case, it seems--so gunshots were dubbed in after the fact).

If you look at it with the proper attitude, *Historia de un gangster* feels almost like a deliberate self-homage by Orol to his film career. He plays a retired gangster with a code of ethics, who is irresistible to younger women but is betrayed by them (except the youngest, who just happens to be played by his current wife), goes on one final "mission" for a good cause, accomplishes it, and then dies tragically. There are worse ways to go.



El fantástico mundo de los hippies* [The Fantastic World of the Hippies] (Caribe Films,



1970) *Prod-Dir-Scr:* Juan Orol; *Photo:* Raphael Remy; *Music Dir:* Leo Acosta; *Prod Mgr:* Francisco del Busto; *Asst Dir:* José Prieto; *Film Ed:* Alfredo Rosas Priego; *Asst Ed:* Ramón Aupart; *Makeup:* María Antonia Díaz; *Asst Photo:*

Juan Trigo; *Sound:* Tito Martínez; *Sound Ed:* Abraham Cruz; *Sound Engin:* Salvador Topete

*spelled *Jippies* on the film, but *Hippies* on posters, ads, etc. Video release title: *Cazador de adictos*

Cast: Eric del Castillo (*Frank Lord*), Dinorah Judith (*Eva*), Wally Barrón (*Leonel*), Juan Orol (*Larry*), Lerri La Meril & Justin Roberts (*naked hippies*), Miguel Ángel Herrera (*Dr. Morton*), Francisco del Busto (*Sgt. Cruz*), Enrique del Río, Ricardo Lima, Cecilio Noble, Alfredo "Tigre" Pérez, Ivan Curiel, Lidia Hernández, Félix Blank, Rogelio del Castillo, Luis López, Alfonso Cremata, Roberto Hernández

Notes: *El fantástico mundo de los hippies* actually has relatively little to do with "hippies." There is considerable discussion of the hippie movement, and how it decayed from a legitimate social movement into a haven for criminals and degenerates, but few hippies show up in the movie itself (despite ads for the film indicating the appearance of "50 authentic hippies!"). The plot also has

almost nothing to do with hippies: one of the villains is disguised as a hippie and Dinorah Judith's character is supposed to be a real hippie, but that's about it.

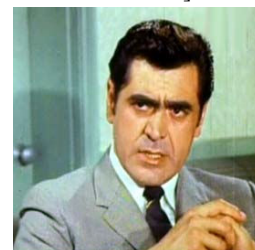
There is a curious sequence, sometimes described as an "orgy," which rather looks like stock footage (although it apparently isn't): shot and edited in an extreme "mod" style, it shows a fair number of hippies dancing, a nude couple embracing, and so forth. This immediately precedes a long scene in a hippie nightclub: Eva, wearing a black bikini, dances on a table top in front of about 5 "hippie" men, while a hippie band plays in the background. This is obviously supposed to be taking place at the same time/place as the previous "orgy" scene, but it clearly is not.



Charles Sandy visits the office of Larry "of the Secret Service." [Although many sources claim Larry and his agent Frank Lord work for the FBI, this is never mentioned in the film itself. Larry announces himself on the telephone as being with the *servicio secreto*,

and Frank just says he works for "President Nixon." It should be noted that in Mexico, *servicio secreto* means something like "Secret Government Police," rather than the specific U.S. agency called the "Secret Service."] He says

his daughter Marcia left home and joined a hippie cult, but he now fears she's being kept against her will. Larry assigns Frank Lord to the case. First, Lord follows Mr. Sandy to Miami, where he sees the middle-aged man flirting with a young blonde.



Lord goes back to New York and, lightly disguised with a wig and "mod" clothes, takes a room in an East Village apartment house run by Walter. Frank "convinces" Walter (he buys him a drink, then threatens him at gunpoint, all the while calling him "fatty" and "greaseball") to explain what's going on: two rival gangs, one based in the East Village and led by fake-hippie Leonel, and the other from the South side of town, are battling over control of a new drug.

Frank checks in with local cop Sgt. Cruz, who refers him to Dr. Morton. Morton runs a free clinic that assists drug-addicted hippies: he agrees to lead Frank to the hangout of Leonel. It's sort of a private club. Frank meets sexy hippie Eva, one of Leonel's followers. He offers to help Leonel obtain a large quantity of drugs. Unfortunately, Leonel has a good memory and identifies Frank as a law enforcement agent. Frank and Eva escape together. Eva leads Frank and Sgt. Cruz to the house where Marcia and her boyfriend Tim Elvis (!) are hiding



out, but they've both been brutally murdered. An informer tells Frank where rival gang leader Gorilla can be located: in a pool hall. After a long fight (actually not too badly-staged, although the action seems slightly speeded-up)



Frank--aided by the last-minute arrival of Larry--captures the thug.

Mr. Sandy is summoned to Larry's office. Larry and Frank tell him they know he's not the real Charles Sandy, but

a criminal named Benny Sorti. He assumed the role of Sandy and used the Secret Service to find Marcia so he could have her killed. This allowed him to take control of her fortune. The false Sandy is placed under arrest.

El fantástico mundo de los hippies is, in the final estimation, a routine (if horribly confusing) crime film, and the "hippie" element is pitifully limited. Perhaps the



most amusing parts of the movie are the scenes in which Frank Lord dresses up like a hippie--when he visits Leonel's club, he's wearing mod clothes, a head-band, and a dangly earring! Leonel himself has extremely long hair and a head-band, as well as a psychedelic-print shirt.

Eva wears a minidress with

a couple of embroidered white hands on it, not exactly typical hippie garb, but she does have flowers painted on her face!

Most of *El fantástico mundo de los hippies* was filmed in Florida, at Luke Moberly's Empire Studios (where Orol had previously shot a number of his movies), in Miami, and Palm Springs, although with the exception of one scene it is set entirely in New York. However, the Florida-as-New York aspect of the film is betrayed in at least one exterior "New York" shot when palm trees can be seen! After principal photography wrapped, Orol went to New York and shot some additional footage--he's seen walking into a subway entrance, and on the street at night--as well as a couple of minutes of street scenes (which do, to be fair, show some long-haired pedestrians who might be classified as "hippies").

Orol's script is vague and confused, although some of the dialogue is either highly amusing or actually rather interesting, particularly the long discourses on the nature of the hippie movement. His direction isn't bad: although he still favours long, tedious, didactic dialogue sequences, at least he is now shooting them in shot-reverse shot fashion, rather than extended master shots. As mentioned above, the pool hall fight between Frank and Gorilla is long and brutal, and Orol also films an earlier nighttime, exterior attack on Lord by a knife-wielding thug largely by

showing their distorted shadows on a wall, a nice touch. The film does include a scene in which Frank Lord watches two go-go dancers for a long time, and Dinorah Judith's mandatory dance number is also longer than necessary (well, 10 seconds would have been longer than necessary), but otherwise *El fantástico mundo de los hippies* is paced reasonably well. The production values are decent, although the interiors done at the Empire Studios always looked exactly what they were: movie sets.



The performances--at least those of the major players--are surprisingly satisfactory. Eric del Castillo plays "Frank Lord" as somewhat ruthless and no-nonsense, rather like Juan Orol in himself in his earlier movies. Orol is good in a supporting role, Wally Barrón is his usual smarmy self although his role is rather small (at least in this copy of the film), and Paco del Busto, Miguel Ángel Herrera, and whoever plays "Walter" are clearly professional actors even if they're not familiar names or faces (del Busto and Herrera had both worked for Orol before). Most of the cast and crew were Cuban exiles or Puerto Ricans, such as José Prieto (allegedly aka "Joseph P. Mawra," director of some notorious '60s exploitation films like *White Slaves of Chinatown*) and Raphael Remy. However, post-production was done in Mexico, which explains the presence of regular Orol film editor Alfredo Rosas Priego and sound technicians Salvador Topete and Abraham Cruz.

The version of this film shown on Cine Nostalgia was apparently cut, since the running time is only 86 minutes versus the reported original 96 minutes. There are photos on the lobby cards which aren't in the film, and at least one scene in which fake-hippie Leonel is seen with a topless woman is missing. I originally saw this film on VHS tape under the title *Cazador de adictos*, but don't have that copy for a comparison.



Jorge Arvizu Films

¡Persíguelas y...alcánzalas!* [Chase Them and...Catch Them!] (Filmex, 1967) *Dir:* Raúl de Anda Jr.; *Scr:* Luis Alcoriza, Edmundo Báez; *Orig. Play:* Carlos Llopis ("Con la vida del otro"); *Photo:* Jorge Stahl Jr.; *Music:* Gustavo César Carrión; *Prod Mgr:* Antonio H. Rodríguez; *Prod Chief:* J. Guerrero Tello; *Asst Dir:* Julio Cahero; *Film Ed:* Rafael Ceballos; *Art Dir:* Alberto L. de Guevara; *Decor:* Adalberto López; *Camera Op:* Andrés

Torres; *Lighting*: Antonio Álvarez; *Makeup*: Dolores Camarillo; *Music/Re-rec*: Roberto Camacho; *Dialog Rec*: Rodolfo Solís; *Union*: STPC

*also released as *Agente secretísimo*



Cast:

Enrique Guzmán (*Jorge Moreno*); Luis Andrade), Rosa María Vázquez (*Sgt. Bustos*), Manolo Fábregas

(*Eric*), Claudia Islas (*Nelly*), Renata Seydel (*Cristina*), Alicia Bonet (*unwed mother*), Guillermo Rivas (*Cmdte. Olmedo*), Berta Moss (*Lady Rubí*), Jorge Arvizu (*Li Po*), Mercedes Pascual (*friend #1 of Lady Rubí*), Sergio Barrios (*henchman*), Norma Mora (*Aracuan's girlfriend*), Carlos Rotzinger (*Pablo*), José Luis Carol (*henchman*), Sergio Golarte, Sergio Ramos (*Lt. Sansores*), Alejandro Suárez (*Aracuan Ramírez*), Mirón Levine (*jewelry shop owner*), Eduardo MacGregor (*jewelry shop mgr*), Carlos Bravo y Fernández "Carl-hillos" (*man at funeral*), Jorge Casanova (*Camacho, police official*), Mario Cid (*policeman on stakeout*), Julián de Meriche (*Lady Rubí's butler*), Nothanael León (*Lady Rubí's guard*), Manuel Zozaya (*Rivera*), Christa von Humboldt (*friend #2 of Lady Rubí*), José L. Murillo (*policeman at Fontana Rosa restaurant*)

Notes: after Pedro Infante's death in an airplane crash in 1957, Mexican producers never tired of trying to find the "new Pedro Infante." Someone who could sing, act, and appear in both urban Everyman roles and rancheras. Julio Aldama, Javier Solís, Vicente Fernández, Pedro Infante Jr., Roberto Guinar,



and others were tested and found wanting (although most of them had some degree of success on their own). Enrique Guzmán was not one of these ersatz Infantes—he was more or less permanently typecast as a pop singer/teen idol and dropped out of films by the age of 30—but he filled the Infante roles in this film, a remake of *Escuela de rateros*.

Guzmán almost exclusively appeared in lighter fare and was a competent, agreeable performer in such roles. In *Persiguelas y...alcánzalas* he plays two parts, the arrogant Jorge and the neurotic and nebbishy Luis (in this part Guzmán at times virtually imitates Manolín!) and is fine—although the characters aren't seen together (Jorge is killed

off at the 21-minute mark and Luis doesn't appear until after this point), they are distinctly different. Guzmán's musical numbers in the picture are limited and unimpressive: he sings a very out of place ballad in a club catering to university students, does a weakly-staged pop song accompanied by Rosa María Vázquez (and Jorge Arvizu on drums!), and performs another romantic ballad in a party scene.

Selfish playboy Jorge Moreno cares little for others and consequently has many enemies. Jewel thief Eric blackmails Jorge over a youthful indiscretion, forcing him to agree to assist in a robbery at a fancy party at the home of Lady Rubí. However, as soon as Eric leaves, Jorge calls police commander Olmedo but is shot and killed by an intruder.

Fortunately for Olmedo, impoverished medical student Luis—who greatly resembles Jorge—was picked up after inadvertently participating in



a brawl at a nightclub where he was working. Luis is convinced to impersonate Jorge after Olmedo promises him the 100,000-peso reward for capturing the mysterious master jewel thief. Jorge's *major-domo* Li Po helps prepare Luis for the role, and Sgt. Bustos (= Sgt. "Busty") goes undercover as a maid in Jorge's house.

The police stake out the home in an attempt to identify the criminal, but are distracted by the arrival of various people. The visitors include Nelly, apparently a former lover of Jorge; Cristina, who was being blackmailed into marriage by Jorge over unpaid debts of her father; a young unwed mother whose child was fathered by the scoundrel Jorge;

extremely annoying practical joker Aracuan; and, finally, Eric. But through a comedy of errors, Eric is



allowed to leave and the police order Luis to attend the party to entrap him. Eric defeats Lady Rubí's elaborate protection system and puts the stolen jewels in Jorge's saxophone case (Jorge was a talented saxophonist, but Luis can't play it) so the booty can be smuggled out of the house (although as it happens, the robbery isn't even discovered before Luis leaves, so this step was totally unnecessary).

Luis goes home. He's nearly killed by the unwed mother's irate brother, and then by Pablo, an auto racer crippled and scarred by Jorge during a race. Pablo confesses to "trying" to kill Jorge earlier (he doesn't know he succeeded), so the police arrest him and leave. Eric shows up to claim the stolen jewels and is subdued by Luis.

The basic plot of *Persíguelas...* has a lot of unresolved loose ends and illogical loop-holes, but the overall result isn't un-entertaining. There are several major sub-plots which, because they are essentially peripheral to the narrative, weren't covered in the brief synopsis above. The Luis-Cristina romance is one: Jorge blackmailed Cristina into agreeing to marriage, to prevent the financial disgrace of her father. Jorge desires Cristina but admits



he's doing this mostly because she despises him: when she says "you'll actually marry me just for that?" he says "if you were open to some other arrangement, that would be even better" (i.e., if she was to become his mistress), but she slaps him. Later, Cristina tells Luis (whom she believes is Jorge) she will marry

him but won't sleep with him ("*nada de nada*"), a bargain Jorge certainly wouldn't have agreed to. But Luis forgives Cristina's father's debts and they fall in love for real (he even confesses his true identity), although Luis says he needs the reward money in order to be worthy of marrying her.

The second sub-plot features obnoxious practical joker Aracuán Ramírez, to whom Jorge promised a large sum of money for an investment. To get rid of the importunate Aracuán, Luis signs a check but the next day—when the bank calls to confirm its validity—Luis denies knowing Aracuán, payback for his numerous cruel pranks. Considering the negligible part his character plays in the film's plot, Alejandro Suárez (Héctor's brother) is given a hugely disproportionate amount of screen time, possibly an attempt to promote him as an up and coming comedian.

The supporting cast is filled with familiar faces and names. Claudia Islas, Alicia Bonet, and Rosa María Vázquez had all been (and would continue to be, at least for a little while) leading ladies, but Chilean import Renata Seydel is assigned the role of Guzmán's love interest. As the film concludes, Sgt. Bustos leaves to change out of her maid's outfit, and Jorge's *major domo* Li Po goes along to "help"—after Luis's struggle with Eric, Li Po and Bustos reappear, both in a state of *déshabillé*, a slightly naughty joke. Jorge Arvizu, although not of Asian heritage, was cast more than once as Asian characters. He's amusing enough here, albeit an egregious stereotyped caricature.

Persíguelas... was the directorial debut of Raúl de Anda Jr., and is competently put together in a no-style sort of way. The only sequence which displays any sort of authorial stamp is Eric's robbery of Lady Rubí's vault,

which is intercut with shots of an interminable Hawaiian dance being performed in the garden for the party guests. Otherwise, this is very bland and conventional in form, showing its stage origins by having much of the "action" occur on sets representing Jorge's house.



El Superman...dilón [The Super Hen-pecked

Man] (Prods. Tijuana © 1990) Exec Prod: Pedro Martínez Garrido; Dir: Javier Durán Escalona; Adapt: Javier Durán Escalona, Marco E. Contreras, Rafael Jiménez Inclán; Story: Pedro Martínez Garrido, Javier Durán Escalona; Photo: Antonio Ruiz; Music: Lázaro Muñoz; Song: Kiko Ramos; Prod Mgr: Marco E. Contreras Murillo; Film Ed: Sergio Soto; Makeup: Carmen de la Torre; Sound Engin: Roberto Martínez; Union: STIC

Cast: Rafael Inclán (*Ángel González*), Carmen Salinas (*doña Cándida*), Silvia Pasquel (*Marta*), Jorge Arvizu "El Tata" (*Lopitos*), Leonorilda Ochoa (*Cuca*), Yirah Aparicio (*secretary to Licenciado*), Mario Zebadua "Colocho" (*Sordo*), Gastón Padilla (*Rosas*), Rosita Bouchot (*Gloria*), Angélica Ruiz, Mike Brito (*Mike Brito*), Alfredo "Pelón" Solares (*waiter at party*), Leandro Espinoza (*Licenciado*), Elena Novi (? *Elenita*), Estephany Evans, Olga Rinzo, Rafael de Quevedo, José Luis de Alva, Miguel Inclán, Jacqueline Goldschimied, "Pactú" el Mimo, Luis Bravo Sosa, Margarita Valencia; Yudel Ramírez, Rudy Fernández, Javier Encizar (*boys*)

Notes: like many other *sexy-comedies*, *El Superman...dilón* is episodic and disjointed, although it is not the worst example of its type. There are a couple of very odd sequences—completely extraneous and unconnected—and the movie doesn't have a "plot" so much as a vague *idea* of a story, but it's not without some entertainment value.

Ángel lives with his wife Marta, their two young sons, and his horrid mother-in-law doña Cándida. Cándida and Marta make his life a living hell, forcing Ángel to do all of the household chores and cooking (in addition to his day job), then complaining about his ineptitude. Ángel's neighbor, co-worker, and *compadre* Rosas has a similar

problem with his overbearing wife, but believes Ángel is the "master" in his home.

Ángel, Rosas, and their friends Lopitos and El Sordo work in a government (?) office (that appears to have something to do with issuing patents) headed by the Licenciado, who is having an affair with his secretary (but leaves her sexually unsatisfied). Various women also work in

the office, including Cuca (who sells contraband merchandise and is also a loan shark).

Various things happen. Cándida is arrested for driving Ángel's car on a "forbidden" day (due to smog, Mexicans in the capital have a rotating system which forces them to leave their personal cars inactive one day a week) and Ángel has to borrow money from Cuca to bail her out (but he still gets no thanks). Ángel and his male friends have a wild party with four female workers--Ángel is paired with Gloria, who becomes sexually aroused by smacking him in

the face! The Licenciado's secretary overhears some gossip afterwards, mistakenly believes Ángel is a super-lover, and spends the rest of the movie trying to seduce him. Cándida and Marta crash a drunken

celebration in the office, hoping to catch Ángel misbehaving, but are severely beaten by the party-goers (while Ángel escapes undetected; when his wife and mother-in-law get home, he's reading a bedtime story to his sons!). Cándida and Marta go through Ángel's pants and find a winning lottery ticket: but it turns out to be falsified, and Cándida is arrested once more. In exchange for bailing his mother-in-law out of jail again, Ángel compels his wife to agree to send the older woman far away to live.

El Superman...dilon is fitfully amusing but there is nothing particularly new about any of its jokes or comedic

situations. Most of the sequences go on too long and out-live their limited amusement potential. Inclán is quite good playing a more restrained character than usual, but most of the rest of the cast resorts to

mugging mercilessly in an attempt to garner a laugh or two. The "sexy" part of this *sexy comedy* is limited to nudity in the sequence featuring Ángel and his three

friends who are paired off with Gloria and three other women, and a brief glimpse of Yirah Aparicio topless.

This is a *bourgeois sexy-comedy*, featuring white-collar workers as opposed to plumbers, bricklayers, etc., but the basic genre requirements are still present.

Amusing in spots, this suffers from the familiar *sexy-comedy* problems--a weak script and structure.



Inappropriate Brotherly Love

El pacto* [The Pact] (Estudios América, 1974) *Exec*

Prod: Raúl de Anda G.; *Dir-Scr:* Sergio Véjar; *Photo:*

Fernando Colín; *Music:* Carlos Jiménez Mabarak; *Prod*

Mgr: Héctor Baltierra; *Asst Dir:* Javier Durán; *Film Ed:*

Ángel Camacho;

Art Dir: Raúl

Cárdenas;

Camera Op:

Antonio Ruiz;

Makeup:

Victoria Celis;

Dialog Rec:

Víctor Rojo; *Re-*

rec: Ricardo

Saldívar; *Union:*

STIC;

Eastmancolor;

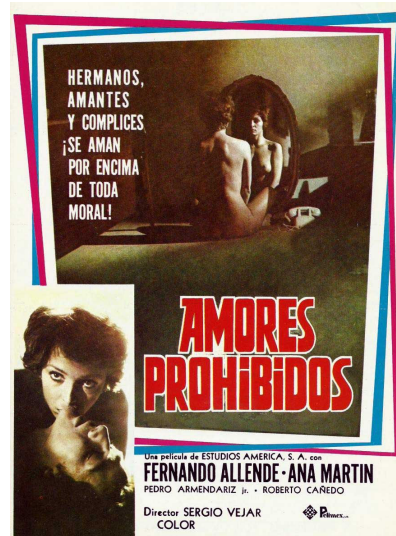
Mexiscope

*aka *Pacto de*

amor and

Amores

prohibidos



Cast: Fernando Allende (*Sergio Carmona*), Ana Martín (*Teresa Carmona*), Pedro Armendáriz Jr. (*Dr. Raúl Mateos*), Roberto Cañedo (*Sr. Carmona*), Hortensia Santoveña (*Lupe*), Lyall Bayardo (*young Teresa*), Paris Bayardo (*young Sergio*), Celia Suárez (*grandmother*), José L. Murillo (*psychiatrist*), Victorio Blanco (*priest*), Marcelo Villamil and Rubén Márquez (*mourners at funeral*)

Notes: Sergio Véjar (1928-2009), originally a cinematographer, turned to directing in the early 1960s with a series of "adult"-themed films such as *Los signos del Zodiaco*, *Solo de noche vienes*, *Los años vacíos*, *Una vez en la noche*, *Eva y Darío*, *La trenza*, etc., although he would occasionally handle more conventional fare such as the spy film *Cuatro contra el crimen* or the Western *El último pistolero*. At the end of the Seventies he largely abandoned his string of sexy melodramas and for the rest of his career made mostly conventional films, many starring musical performers like Pedro Fernández (6 movies), Los Tigres del Norte, Lucero, Tatiana, etc.

El pacto, although largely sold as a sexy story of forbidden love (= incest), vacillates between this theme, a precursor of *Fatal Attraction*-style psycho-lover intrigue, and a rather sad depiction of mental illness. This mix of exploitation, melodrama, and a "serious" topic doesn't make for an entirely successful film, although it is lively enough at times.

The mother of young Sergio and Teresa dies (later, we learn she was in a mental institution), and the children



spend some time at their grandmother's home on the beach. They wander off together and create a fantasy world of their own. The slightly older Teresa has visions



of a faceless woman in a flowing white gown which terrify her: she makes Sergio agree to a "pact" that they will never be separated.

Years pass. Sergio and

Teresa live with their father, a writer and university instructor. Teresa "left her studies" (possibly in art, since she's seen sculpting busts) because she couldn't bear to be apart from Sergio. Sergio attends the local university and has a girlfriend, Lucía. Teresa, largely due to her father's encouragement, is engaged to young Dr. Raúl Mateos.



However, her behaviour is increasingly odd, and she rarely leaves the house (except to spy on Sergio when he's with his friends). Teresa seduces Sergio and they have sex. They're

seen by housekeeper Lupe, who later informs Teresa she feels compelled to report this to Sr. Carmona. Teresa pushes Lupe down a flight of stairs, and—when this doesn't do the trick—finishes off the gravely-injured woman by smothering her! [This is a grim sequence, with Lupe moaning in pain and Teresa dispatching Sergio to call for an ambulance so she can complete her task of murder. Oddly enough, nothing ever comes of this, in fact Lupe is never mentioned again!]

Sergio loves Teresa but not in the same obsessive way, and visits to a psychiatrist who helps him understand their relationship is not normal. Teresa marries Raúl and he moves into the house she shares with her father and brother (yeah, that's normal), but on their wedding night she becomes hysterical and refuses to consummate their marriage. Teresa later shaves her eyebrows and cakes her face in white makeup. She also tells Sergio she's pregnant with his child and becomes infuriated when he says what they did is wrong. She later hallucinates that her kitten is a baby and (in another disturbing scene) strangles it—then leaves the dead cat on Sergio's bed with a note reading "It's your son." She also inserts a razor blade in a bar of soap so Sergio cuts himself while washing his hands. Teresa finally snaps and attacks Sergio with a dagger; he survives, and she is taken away to a mental hospital.

Sr. Carmona explains to Raúl that his wife had schizophrenia and he was afraid one of their children would inherit the illness, but he didn't want to know which

one it was, so he never took either Sergio or Teresa to see a psychiatrist. That's some good parenting, there.

Although *El pacto* stacks the deck in many ways to portray Teresa as a dangerous psycho, the viewer cannot help but feel sorry for her, particularly after Carmona's final revelation. Had he taken steps to get professional treatment for his children, much anxiety (and at least one murder) would have been avoided. Sergio, although it's explained he never was actually mentally ill—his proximity to Teresa influenced him—goes to see a psychiatrist and begins to perceive things differently (although he still cares about Teresa and in fact exhibits signs of jealousy at her wedding). Teresa is allegedly receiving therapy before her final breakdown (this isn't shown, but Raúl and Sr. Carmona discuss it), but it's a case of too little, too late.

There are various loose ends, not the least of which is Lupe's death (presumably passed off as an accident, although dying from a fall isn't the same as being smothered to death). There are also a few things which might be explained away as artistic license, such as footage of the woman-in-the-white-nightgown walking into the sea (committing suicide?), which may or may not



contradict Sr. Carmona's statement that she died in a mental hospital (maybe she ran away and drowned herself, or perhaps this footage isn't supposed to be

"real"). Teresa also has flashbacks of Rorschach test images during her psychotic episodes, although if she'd never seen a psychiatrist, why would she see these things? *El pacto* suggests Teresa's illness is getting progressively worse, but it is still difficult to believe the person we see would ever have been capable of being separated from Sergio long enough to attend college, even briefly (re: the "leaving her studies" reference).

Ana Martín gets the bulk of the acting chores in *El pacto* (which is basically a 5 character film: Teresa, Sergio, Sr. Carmona, Raúl, and Lupe). She is convincing throughout, going from pitiful to frightening at the drop of a hat. The only criticism I have of her performance can be attributed chiefly to the script: she is never really "normal," which means she alternates between calm-but-crazy and manic-berserk, not necessarily a really wide range. Fernando Allende is satisfactory, as are Cañedo and Armendáriz (and Hortensia Santoveña, although she only has a couple of scenes before her character is killed off).

El pacto contains a number of scenes of the pre-pubescent Sergio and Teresa engaged in naked play, which slightly echoes *Eva y Darío*, one of Véjar's previous films. Véjar had also dealt with the theme of incest before, in *Los años vacíos*, and would return to the topic in *Furia pasional* (whose female protagonist, Hilda Aguirre,

slightly resembles Ana Martín in appearance and demeanour).

Production values are fine, with the majority of the action occurring in a few rooms of the large Carmona mansion.



Furia pasional [Passionate Fury] (Tescio

Productions, 1976)* *Prod:* René F. Rodríguez; *Dir:* Sergio

Véjar; *Scr:* Óscar Dulzaides; *Photo:* Antonio Ruiz; *Music:* Ernesto Cortázar [Jr.]; *Prod Coord:* Rafael Remy; *Prod Mgr:* Lic. Jorge García Besné; *Asst Dir:* Camilo Vila; *Film Ed:* Sigfrido García Muñoz; *Lighting Chief:* Francisco Muñoz; *Makeup:* Rafael Marrero; *Sound Engin:* Salvador Topete
*Mexican



release credits Víctor Films and Tescio Producciones

Cast: Ana Luisa Peluffo (*Sonia*), Raúl Ramírez (*Joseph*), Hilda Aguirre (*July*), Alfonso Munguía (*Edwin*), Hilda Cibár (*Liz*), Manuel Cepeda (?*James*), Gladys Núñez (?*Laura*), Alexandra Johnson, Nancy Collado, Marcelo Longo (?*Mike*)

[Note: the on-screen credits list the name “Liz” as if this were another performer, but it seems clear this is supposed to signify Hilda Cibár “as” Liz.]

Notes: for some reason, brother-sister incest (or, more frequently, the threat thereof) was utilised as a topic in multiple Mexican films of the 1960s and 1970s. Among the more notorious are *Secreto de confesión* (1970), in which a half-brother and sister (unknown to them) marry and have a child, and are allowed to live happily ever after because a priest advises their mother to keep the secret! *El pacto* (1974), directed by Sergio Véjar—who also did *Furia pasional*—features a brother and sister who have vowed to love only each other, although the brother changes his mind and the sister is eventually carted off to a mental hospital.

Furia pasional is billed as “A Film By Óscar Dulzaides,” although he’s only credited with the script. However, apparently Dulzaides recut the film to such an extent that Véjar wanted his name removed (it remains on the print I saw, but not on publicity materials). Curiously, the credits of the movie appear over various nude scenes from the film, but at least some of these—notably footage of Ana Luisa Peluffo and Raúl Ramírez in bed together, which is also used on the posters—aren’t in the picture at all! Since the version on Cine Nostalgia does include a fair amount of nudity otherwise, it doesn’t seem these

other scenes were specifically censored. Simply removed as part of the re-cutting, perhaps.

Although shot in the Dominican Republic, *Furia pasional* doesn’t advertise this (apparently Dominican Airlines provided some services, because the company is promoted in several scenes). Raúl Ramírez, after making his screen debut in Mexican cinema in the 1950s, moved his operations out of the country in the 1970s, making films in the USA and Guatemala before returning to Mexico in the ‘80s—he was just an actor-for-hire rather than



producer/actor in *Furia pasional*, so perhaps he took a break from his own filmmaking and hopped over to Hispaniola for a couple of weeks for this one.

Young adults Edwin and July live with their wealthy father Joseph. Edwin and July have different mothers (both deceased): their nanny died 10 years earlier, and they have grown extremely close in the intervening years. Although Edwin has a girlfriend (Liz) and July a sort-of boyfriend (James), the two young people are attracted to each other. July encourages Edwin’s interest, but he pulls away, feeling guilty. He finally decides to marry Liz and move away, and sleeps with her to seal the deal (he also begins a sexual relationship with a sympathetic prostitute). This upsets July.

Meanwhile, the womanising Joseph—who has one mistress, the unfaithful Laura, and has also maintained a long-time romantic relationship with his secretary—is irritated to discover his former lover Sonia has returned to the country. She is July’s mother (July thinks she is dead) and has been paid to stay away all these years, but now wants to see her daughter.

James gets the opportunity to move to New York and



study, and offers to take July along. They will be married there. He realises she loves Edwin but believes taking her out of the unnatural environment will allow her to begin to live a normal life. She agrees.

Edwin meets Sonia and she explains that Joseph isn’t really July’s mother—she only told Joseph this so he would support her and the child, because the real father had rejected her after learning of her affair with Joseph—and thus there is no impediment to a relationship between Edwin and July. Edwin departs, and Joseph arrives to try

and convince Sonia to leave. She shoots him to death and calls the police.

Edwin finds a note from July and races to the airport but is too late—she has gone to New York with James.

Furia pasional was sold as a sexy melodrama, and seems to have been designed to include as much lust-



potential as possible. Even in the cut version there is at least partial nudity on display from the actresses portraying July, Liz, Laura, Edwin's prostitute

girlfriend, and a topless nightclub dancer. Ana Luisa Peluffo has no nude scenes (except under the credits) but appears in skimpy underwear twice. The romantic and sexual couplings run the gamut from purely mercenary to purely sexual to romantic to platonic. In one amusing bit, Edwin and July host a party at their house, and at one point everyone pairs off and wanders out in to the darkness to make out!

July is portrayed as the aggressor in the unconsummated incestuous relationship with Edwin, somewhat like Teresa in *El pacto*, but less crazy. She constantly tells her brother they should ignore what people might say and just go for it. However, she won't make the first move: she pretends to be asleep when Edwin comes into her bedroom and ogles her (she sleeps nude, of course); he can't bring himself to touch her and leaves, frustrated. This doesn't stop her from being jealous when she learns Edwin has slept with Liz, and that he's involved with a prostitute.

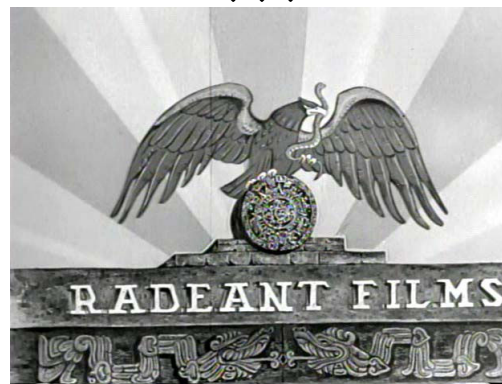
Hilda Aguirre made a name for herself in the Sixties playing perky teens/young adults, albeit often with a more emotionally vulnerable aspect than, say, Angélica María in the same period. After becoming a wife and mother (in 1973 and 1975, respectively), Aguirre "retired" from acting but soon changed her mind (*Furia pasional*'s publicity ballyhoos her "return to cinema"). However, in the second stage of her career she was often cast in roles



requiring nudity, and left her squeaky-clean image behind. Ironically, her career was interrupted again, by a second marriage and a serious automobile accident in the mid-80s,

but Aguirre persevered and made yet another comeback in films and on television.

She's relatively restrained in *Furia pasional*, underplaying a role that could have been milked for hysteria. The rest of the cast is fine, made up of seasoned professionals for the most part. The production values are adequate, with the vast majority (if not all) of the scenes shot on location. Given the alleged post-production tampering, the direction and pacing are surprisingly coherent, although there are a few abrupt transitions which suggest something has been omitted.



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