

JOSÉ MARÍA DE TAVIRA

MARTINA GARCÍA

ALBERTO ESTRELLA
AS "EL TIGRE"

PRESS KIT

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WHO WOULD YOU
GIVE YOUR LIFE FOR?

AMAR A MORIR

A FILM BY FERNANDO LEBRIJA

A MÉXICO-COLOMBIA CO-PRODUCTION

WWW.AMARAMORIR.COM

OFFICIAL SELECTION
OF THE
2009 SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

WORLD PREMIERE
OF

AMAR A MORIR

WWW.AMARAMORIR.COM

A DIRECTORIAL DEBUT

BY

FERNANDO LEBRIJA

STARRING

JOSÉ MARIÁ DE TAVIRA

MARTINA GARCÍA

ALBERTO ESTRELLA

MAYRA SERBULO

CRAIG MCLACHLAN

RAÚL MÉNDEZ

MIGUEL RODARTE

SILVERIO PALACIOS

SERGIO JURADO

FACT SHEET

- FORMAT:** shot on Super 16mm film transferred to 35mm with 5.1 Dolby SR
- ASPECT RATIO:** 1:85
- COLOR:** color
- LANGUAGE:** Spanish (subtitled in English)
- SHOOTING LOCATION:** Mexico City and the Mexican State of Michoacán
- DURATION OF SHOOT:** 9 weeks
- DISTRIBUTION:** co-distributed by Artecinema and Videocine (a subsidiary of Televisa) in Mexico, Central America, and South America
- WORLDWIDE RIGHTS:** all other worldwide rights available
- WORLD PREMIERE:** 2009 Santa Barbara International Film Festival
- FIRST RELEASE DATE:** March 2009 (Mexico)
- PRODUCTION:** a Mexico-Colombia co-production
- PRODUCTION ENTITY:** Laguna Pictures (Mexico)
- SOUNDTRACK RELEASE:** Universal Music (Mexico)
- ORIGINAL SONG RECORDINGS:**
- “Hallelujah” sung by American Idol Top 4 Jason Castro
- “No Fin Hay” produced by 11-time Grammy Award-winner Sebastian Kryz
- “Corrido Tierra de Tigres” performed by narcorrido folk group Grupo Exterminador
- MOVIE WEBSITE:** www.amaramorir.com

LOGLINE AND SYNOPSIS

LOGLINE

The young heir to a vast Mexico City banking empire runs away from the cold, corrupt, racist, money-driven, super-elite, super-rich, classist world into which he was born, takes a wrong turn down a wrong road, and finds himself stranded in a poor, remote, beach community where he experiences a love at first sight with an exotically beautiful local girl—one that will place him—and her—in grave danger at the hands of a ruthless drug lord.

SYNOPSIS

Mexico City, the present: Twentysomething ALEJANDRO VIZCAINO (*José María de Tavira*) would on outward appearances seem to have it all. He's handsome, rich, and sole heir to the assets of VIZCAINO INCORPORATED, a vast banking empire built by his father, RICARDO VIZCAINO (*Sergio Jurado*). But Alejandro's father is oppressively controlling, his business practices and his cronies are highly corrupt. His super-elite, super-rich circle of friends joke at the expense of Mexico's indigenous peoples, all for a good laugh. Ricardo controls where young Alejandro goes, what he does, and has hand-picked the young woman to whom he will be wed. When Alejandro can take no more, he, in an act of rebellion, drag-races along a Mexico City street. A terrible accident happens, one that shakes him to the core, one that makes him realize he must escape the world into which he was born. Risking the loss of an unimaginable inheritance, Alejandro flees down a Mexican highway, takes a wrong turn, and is stranded in a poor, remote, beachside community where nomadic surfers go to surf. It's there he sees ROSA (*Martina García*), a local girl, beautiful as an exotic rose, who rides by on a bike and disappears into the night as suddenly as first she appeared. For Alejandro, it is an inexplicable, ineffable love at first. Her social class, of which his elitist father would disapprove, never once enters his mind. At sunrise, he seeks her out, but no one will admit to knowing her or to where she can be found. A mischievous mute (*Manuel Poncelis*) reveals to him her current location. Alejandro goes to her, exuberant, and once finding her, their mutual love for one another is sparked. But it will be a love for which Alejandro will have to fight, and fight hard, for Rosa lives under the controlling grip of EL TIGRE (*Alberto Estrella*), the local drug lord who is feared in all the town. The courage Alejandro lacked to confront his manipulative father, he must now muster up to save Rosa from a life much like the one he himself left behind, one that is not free. Alejandro plots Rosa's escape, and together they take flight in a race for their lives, as El Tigre follows in mad pursuit. They feel no fear, for whatever happens, theirs, they know, is a lifetime love that will be to the death, *amar a morir*.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

FROM
DIRECTOR-WRITER-PRODUCER FERNANDO LEBRIJA

AMAR A MORIR is not an autobiography, but it is a response to the profound contrast I witnessed between Mexico's lower and upper classes as I was growing up in this beautiful country of Mexico.

I was born in Guadalajara City, but as a baby we moved to Mexico City—a bustling city full of culture, tradition, and history—where I spent most of my childhood years. But it's also a city in which the rich are tremendously powerful and the poor have limited options. I didn't notice the class differences so much back then, I was just a kid.

When I was 14, my father decided to move our family to Guadalajara, where he first met and fell in love with my mom. He wanted to escape from the rough and tumble of Mexico City big city life, and wanted to raise his kids in what he thought would be a healthier, more peaceful environment for them to grow up in. In fact, as a young teenager who found it difficult to adjust to life in a smaller quieter city, I became an adrenalin junkie and a total troublemaker. (I've always been an adrenalin junkie, it's why I like surfing and extreme sports). When my parents could no longer keep me under control, they sent me to Randolph Macon Military Academy in Virginia to get some discipline. To their surprise, after a year in the military academy, I came back even worse.

My godfather stepped in, and said to me, "I have a job for you, a creative job, you'll like it." "Great," I thought, "a creative job." The job was working as a carpenter with other carpenters, most of them indigenous. In the 6 months I worked with them, I bonded with them. I got to know them and got to know their families and saw how they lived. We drank tequila together and ate together, and had a good time. And because of my working with them, I became a better person.

Adapting to the smaller city of Guadalajara was not easy for me at first, but it was here, in the summer of 1991, that I got a part-time job as a production assistant in a local television station and I finally found my real passion. From then on my life completely changed and my goal was to become a movie director. I had always enjoyed watching movies with my father when I was young, especially American movies like Coppola's and Sergio Leone's westerns with Clint Eastwood, but it never crossed my mind that one day I would also direct a movie.

I later returned to Mexico City to work in a bigger TV network, and visited an old friend I went to school with when I was living there. He was born into a family of great privilege, a kid like "Alejandro Vizcaino," who would, today, have to drive around with bodyguards. I saw the world he lived in with new eyes. I saw an elite, corrupt, classist faction of Mexican society driven by money, who condescended to indigenous people, to people of lower classes. I saw how they treated their maids, not like slaves, but not that good. I didn't like it. I remember, we went out to the clubs and went back to his house. It was like 3 in the morning. And my friend wanted a quesadilla. Do you know how easy it is to make a quesadilla? You melt some cheese in a tortilla.

He can do it himself. Instead he goes to wake up his maid to make him quesadillas. He wakes her up at 3am to make him quesadillas. Can you imagine? I thought it was rude. And I told him, and we almost got into a physical fight.

I never forgot that confrontation I had with my old friend, and in film school, at AFI (The American Film Institute), I became increasingly preoccupied with the elite world he lived in, their attitudes and how they lived. I got this idea to tell the story of a young guy, who lives in that loveless Mexico City, super-elite, super-rich society, who grows to hate it, who rebels against it, who will want to run away from it, and everything it stands for, as far as he can go. And I thought, where will he run away to? He will run away to a place that is the complete opposite of the world he grew up in.

He can run away to the beaches of Ocelotitlan, these beautiful beaches, surfing havens, where my father took me as a boy (where we shot the film): unspoiled, undeveloped, no hotel rooms, only a hammock to sleep in. The people who live there are all indigenous, they're unaffected, they don't know and they don't care about the world crises. They live very simply in houses made of straw with dirt floors, and to them a taco is like caviar. There are no phones, no TV. They live to feed their families and they're generous with what little they have. I wanted "Alejandro," my protagonist, to find that other world.

I wanted him to experience real love for the first time, not any love, but a love at first sight, an incredible love that will take you fast and take you hard. As the Greeks say, "falling in love is like madness", it makes you mad, it makes you crazy. Alejandro would do anything for her, even risking his own life. He will do things for this girl he could never imagine himself doing. I believe in love at first sight, because it has happened to me. I did crazy things. And how do you explain it? You cannot. It just happens.

I didn't want their love to be easy, the stakes needed to be high. He would have to really fight to win "Rosa," the love of his life. To make the stakes high, I came up with the idea of having this small beach town controlled by a drug lord. "El Tigre," the drug lord in my story, he not only runs the town but controls Rosa, the most exotically beautiful girl who lives there. Alejandro, I had decided, will have to fight a drug lord to have Rosa. The stakes will be high, very high.

What also motivated me to tell this story was to somehow unveil the harsh realities facing Mexico today and how these problems are affecting the dreams and self-expression of our youth. I am shocked by the prevailing levels of racism and classism. Today's Mexico is also going through one of its worst times of corruption, poverty, violence, and drug trafficking. When writing this script, I wanted to experiment with the idea of this forbidden love and how it could or could not survive in such a chaotic world.

It was a long, difficult road to making this film, a roller coaster ride. There were many problems and challenges along the way:

I began developing the script with Harrison Reiner, my screenwriting professor, in his writing workshop at UCLA, where I did post-graduate work after AFI, in the Fall of 2003. I saw that he

had a connection with the story I was trying to tell and that he had a passion for mentoring young filmmakers. I asked him to be my creative producer and help me write AMAR A MORIR. I didn't have any money, of course, but he agreed, and we got to work.

The scripting phase of the project was interrupted when my father died suddenly of heart attack. It was shocking because he was a very healthy, fit 58 years old. No one in my family saw it coming. We lost six months. We got back to work and Harrison's mother died suddenly and tragically, we lost several more months.

After two long years of writing the script, I began looking for financing, which was very difficult for a first-time feature film director. I secured the initial financing in Mexico and our shoot was scheduled for Spring 2006. We began pre-production in Mexico when the presidential election was taking place, the Mexican economy was uncertain, and our investors decided to pull out. It took another year to get our investors and were able to take advantage of new tax incentives available from the Mexican government.

It was a tough 9-week shoot. We experienced all the difficulties that come with shooting in a very remote location in rural Mexico, where there were no phones, no cell service, and the closest bank was 2 hours driving. The temperature was over 110 degrees. We were in an area of Mexico considered to be dangerous, a no man's land and drug dealer's paradise. Some crew members couldn't take the harsh conditions of the shoot and abandoned the production to return to the City. But the main team of the film was made up of warriors. Our lead actor, José Mariá de Tavira, who plays "Alejandro," said to me, "Fernando, if we have to carry lights or cables, we don't care, but we're going to finish this film and support you." That was great coming from our main actor. That comment motivated me to keep on.

My mother became a key part of the team, like everybody's godmother on the set, making sure the cast and crew were comfortable. She lived with them, and she cooked for them, handling every emergency like when our still photographer fainted on the set from the oppressive heat. She would drive members of the cast and crew home from midnight shoots, up and down winding mountain roads, through drug lord territory. Can you believe it?

After all this work and adventure, we're extremely happy with our movie. Thanks to the actors and my main team, we made this film happen. I'm indebted to this group of committed craftsmen and artists. I was very lucky to have them as part of my team.

My father, who supported me in my film career, saw the start of making this film, but not its end. I'm sad and angry that he is not alive today to see that I really made something happen, that the rebel he once knew has directed a feature film.

In the end credits, there is a dedication in memory of my father, thanking him for showing me about life and the mystical beaches of Michoacán where AMAR A MORIR, loosely translated, "Love to the Death," was shot. But of course love does not end when those we love die, it stays with us for the rest of our days. As it is written in the dedication at the end of the film, "Te quiero Pa." "I love you Pa."

PRINCIPAL CAST



JOSÉ MARIÁ DE TAVIRA ALEJANDRO VIZCAINO

was born in Mexico City to prominent Mexican theater director Luis de Tavira and television and film actress Rosa Mariá Bianchi. At the age of 7, he made his stage debut with Compañía Nacional de Teatro, Mexico's national theater. At age 10, he made his film debut in *THE MASK OF ZORRO*, playing young Zorro to Antonio Banderas' adult Zorro. He studied theater at University of London's Royal Holloway College and went on to star in the 2006 Mexican box office comedy smash hit, *CANSADA DE BESAR SAPOS* (English title: *Tired of Kissing Frogs*), and in the 2008 Mexican release of *ARRANCÁME LA VIDA*, directed by Roberto Sneider, winner of the 1995 Silver Ariel Award, Mexico's Academy Award, for Best First Film.



MARTINA GARCÍA ROSA

was born in Bogota, Colombia. She studied acting in Colombia with master acting teachers Paco Barrera and Alfonso Ortiz. She starred in numerous television series in Colombia before making her motion picture debut in *PERDER ES CUESTION DE MÉTODO*, a film nominated in the Montreal World Film Festival for its grand prize, the Grand Prix des Amériques. She recently completed shooting on *RABIA*, directed by Sebastián Cordero, a three-time nominee for Mexico's Silver Ariel Award and a nominee for the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival for his work on *CRONICAS*.



ALBERTO ESTRELLA AS "EL TIGRE"

was born in Guadalajara, Mexico. He was a 2003 nominee for Mexico's Silver Ariel Award for Best Actor for his work on *EXXXORCISMOS*. He is a veteran actor of Mexican film and television with 90 produced credits. In 2008, he starred in *LLAMANDO A UN ÁNGEL*, winner of the Audience Award for Best Film at the Guadalajara Film Festival. He recently completed work on *LAS BUENAS YERBAS*, directed by María Novaro, an 11-time Ariel Award nominee and winner of the Latin America Cinema Award of the Sundance Film Festival. Mr. Estrella teaches acting to emerging young actors in Mexico City.



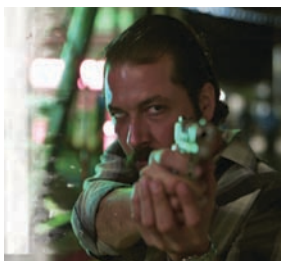
CRAIG MCLACHLAN NICK

was born in Sydney, Australia. He is a four-time winner of the Logie Award, Australia's Emmy Award. He enjoyed great success and became a household name, particularly in Great Britain and Australia, for his work on the long-running TV series NEIGHBOURS. He starred in the popular British television series BUGS, playing the role of a free-lance agent working to combat terrorist threats. He starred in GREASE in London's West End Theater District, has graced the stages of the Edinburgh Playhouse in Scotland and the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff, is a stand-up comic, and as a recording artist was a chart-topper in both the U.K. and Australia.



MAYRA SERBULO AMALIA

is a veteran film actress and a four-time nominee for the Ariel Award, Mexico's Academy Award. She appeared in Mel Gibson's APOCALYPTO, with Gael García Bernal in Y TU MAMÁ TAMBIÉN, and with Brad Pitt in THE MEXICAN. Ms. Serbulo received one of her four Ariel Award nominations for her work on CUENTOS DE HADAS PARA DORMIR COCODRILOS (English title: Bedtime Fairy Tales for Crocodiles), a film recognized with 13 Ariel Award nominations.



RAÚL MÉNDEZ TIBÚRON

one of the most chameleon-like actors working today in Mexican cinema, was born in Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico. He was a 2005 Ariel Award nominee for Best Supporting Actor for his work on MATANDO CABOS, a film nominated for a total of 5 Ariel Awards. He has appeared in numerous other critically recognized feature films, including KILOMETRO 31 (nominated for 3 Ariel Awards), a film that broke Mexican box office records; UN MUNDO MARAVILLOSO (nominated for 3 Ariel Awards and winner of the Mexican Cinema Journalists Award for Best Film); and EL TIGRE DE SANTA JULIA (nominated for 5 Ariel Awards and winner of the Mexican Cinema Journalists Award for Best Film). He appeared in the feature film THE LEGEND OF ZORRO, starring Antonio Banderas and Catherine Zeta-Jones and in Showtime's FIDEL, the story of Fidel Castro, starring Victor Hugo Martin and Gael García Bernal.



SILVERIO PALACIOS PANCHO

a seriously comedic, seriously busy actor with 33 produced film credits since the year 2000, was born in Colima, Mexico. He is a graduate of Centro Universitario de Teatro de la UNAM theater training program. He has been nominated for the Ariel Award 3 times and won the Mexican MTV Award for Most Bizarre Sex Scene in *MATANDO CABOS*. He appeared in *Y TU MAMÁ TAMBIÉN* with Gael García Bernal and Diego Luna and in *THE LEGEND OF ZORRO* with Antonio Banderas and Catherine Zeta-Jones. In 2008, he won the Diosa de Plata, the Mexican Cinema Journalists Award for Best Actor, for his work on *MORIRSE EN DOMINGO* (English title: *Never on Sunday*), a black comedy in which he played probably the only funeral director in all of Mexico who'd think little or nothing of violating the forbidden practice of disposing of a dead person on a Sunday.



MIGUEL RODARTE CAPTAIN FERNANDEZ

born in Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico, is a Strasberg method-trained actor. Most recently, he starred in the 2008 release of *PURGATORIO*, directed by 3-time Ariel Award-winner Roberto Rochín. In 2003, he appeared in *CASA DE LOS BABYS* directed by renowned indie film director, John Sayles. He was nominated for the Mexican MTV Favorite Actor Award and for Mexico's coveted Heraldo Award for Best Actor for his work on *EL TIGRE DE SANTA JULIA*, released in 2002, in which he played the title role of "El Tigre de Santa Julia," an army deserter turned Robin Hood who steals from thieves to give money to the poor. He recently completed work on *EL SOLDADO PEREZ* (English title: *Private Perez*), now in post-production, directed by Beto Gómez, a Guadalajara Film Festival Award winner.



SERGIO JURADO RICARDO VIZCAINO

a Mexico City native, is a veteran Mexican television actor and a prolific composer of music for Mexican television. Acting credits for Mr. Jurado, for Mexican television, include appearances on *LA MADRASTA*; *PIEL DEL OTOÑO*; *RUBÍ*; *MARIANA DE LA NOCHE*; *MUJER, CASOS DE LA VIDA REAL*; and *ALCANZAR UNA ESTRELLA*.

THE FILMMAKERS

FERNANDO LEBRIJA : DIRECTOR/WRITER/PRODUCER

Born in Guadalajara, Mexico, Lebrija holds an M.F.A. degree in producing from the prestigious American Film Institute in Los Angeles. He undertook post-graduate work in directing at the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television, and began script development work on *AMAR A MORIR* in a post-graduate screenwriting workshop at the Professional Programs of U.C.L.A.'s School of Film and Television. Prior to his training at the American Film Institute, he produced more than 20 television shows for Fox Sports, MTV Latin America, and for Televisa, Mexico's premiere television network. Producing credits for Televisa include *Generacion X* — a popular TV magazine show for



Generation X-ers; *Rostros de Mexico* (English title: *Faces of Mexico*), a documentary series portraying the lives of notable Mexican nationals; *The Ricky Martin Music Special*; *The 2000 Sydney Olympic Summer Games*; and *The 2001 Grammy Awards*. He has directed numerous music videos for celebrated folk, rock, and hip hop groups, including two-time Latin Grammy Award-winning rock and hip hop band Molotov, Latin Grammy and Billboard Award-winning hip hop group Akwid, and Best Norteño Performance Grammy winners Los Tigres del Norte, considered to be the most influential group in the genre with more than 20 million record albums sold. In 2003, his AFI thesis short film, *FLIRTING WITH DEATH*, which he wrote and produced, was selected by Showtime for its Latino Filmmakers Showcase and is the basis for his upcoming black comedy TV series of the same title which will air on Televisa in 2010. Lebrija was nominated for the 2003 Desi Arnaz Memorial Award for Best Story for a Motion Picture or Telefilm at the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival, founded by Oscar-nominated actor Edward James Olmos, for his work on *JAGUAR WARRIOR*, portraying the rise and fall of a great Aztec warrior. His next two feature films, which he is now developing with his former mentor, now his writing and producing partner, Harrison Reiner, under whom he studied at U.C.L.A., are historic epics, one of which is set at the time of the Mexican Revolution, the other a tightly held secret. His feature film directorial debut, *AMAR A MORIR*, completed in December of 2008, was selected for a world premiere at the 2009 Santa Barbara International Film Festival, and is slated for wide release in Mexico, Central America, and South America in March of 2009.

HARRISON REINER: PRODUCER AND CO-WRITER

Born in New York City, Reiner holds a B.F.A. in Drama from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where he studied Stanislavsky acting technique with renowned master acting teacher Stella Adler, the only American to have studied with Stanislavsky himself. He studied classical acting at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, and subsequently undertook interdisciplinary graduate study in film, business, and law at Columbia University in the City of New York, where he earned an M.F.A. While in graduate school, he simultaneously worked in screenplay development for the Emmy Award-winning, Oscar-nominated PBS series AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE. Since relocating to



Los Angeles from his native New York, Reiner has worked steadily in film and television, first as Story Editor at RKO Pictures during the filming of John Sayles' EIGHT MEN OUT, then as Production Executive for Sovereign Pictures, co-distributors of REVERSAL OF FORTUNE (starring Glenn Close, Ron Silver, and Jeremy Irons), IMPROMPTU (starring Hugh Grant, Judy Davis, Mandy Patinkin, and Bernadette Peters) and Academy Award-winning motion pictures MY LEFT FOOT (starring Daniel Day Lewis) and CINEMA PARADISO (directed by Giuseppe Tornatore). He is an Editors Guild story analyst and has served as story analyst for CBS-Paramount Television, Universal Pictures, Sherry Lansing Productions in association with Paramount Pictures, Warner Brothers Feature Animation, the Samuel Goldwyn Company, and Turner Network Television. He is a longtime mentor to minority filmmakers, having mentored emerging Latino and African-American writers, directors, and producers at the National Association of Latino Independent Producers Latino Writers Lab and Producers Academy, the Hollywood Black Film Festival, and at the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival, where Lebrija and he first met. Reiner has lectured on screenwriting at the Producers Guild of America, the Directors Guild of America, the Organization of Black Screenwriters, and at the Scottish Film Academy at Napier University in Edinburgh. He's taught story development at U.C.L.A. Extension, writing for short film in the M.F.A. Directing Program at U.C.L.A.'s School of Film and Television and writing for feature film at the school's Professional Programs, where development work on AMAR A MORIR first began.

DAVID WISNIEVITZ: PRODUCER

Mr. Wisnievitz, born in Mexico City, is a veteran filmmaker, who's worked on more than 30 motion pictures in a wide range of capacities; from cameraman to gaffer, from soundman to optical effects specialist, from unit production manager to producer. Amongst his most notable credits are Unit Production Manager on the PBS American Playhouse production of *THE BALLAD OF GREGORIO CORTEZ*, starring Oscar-nominated actor Edward James Olmos, directed by critically acclaimed director Robert M. Young; Production Manager on *THE MILAGRO BEANFIELD WAR*, directed by Academy Award-winning director Robert Redford; Co-Producer on *MARVIN'S ROOM*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Academy Award winners Meryl Streep, Diane Keaton, and Robert Deniro; Co-Executive Producer on *SELENA*, for which actress Jennifer Lopez won a Golden Globe best actress nomination; Co-Producer on *SLIDING DOORS*, nominated in 1999 for the British Academy Award for Best British Film, starring Academy Award-winning actress Gwyneth Paltrow; Executive Producer on *A CIVIL ACTION*, starring Academy Award-nominated actor John Travolta and Academy Award winner Robert Duvall; and Co-Producer on *TRAINING DAY*, for which Denzel Washington took home a Best Actor Academy Award.



MATTHIAS EHRENBERG: PRODUCER

Mexico City-based film producer Matthias Ehrenberg had an auspicious first foray into filmmaking with two of his early film assignments, working in 1997 as unit production manager on the Golden Globe-nominated feature film, *MEN WITH GUNS*, directed by iconic indie film director John Sayles, and again in 2000 as unit production manager on *BEFORE NIGHT FALLS*, for which actor Javier Bardem won a Best Actor Academy Award nomination and a Golden Globe nod. The list of feature films on which Ehrenberg has worked as producer is well-known to the Ariel Awards, Mexico's Academy Awards, with one nomination for *VIVIR MATA*, one for *ROSARIO TIJERAS*, one for *LA HIJA DEL CANIBAL* a.k.a. *LUCIA, LUCIA*, 7 nominations and 2 wins for *FIBRA OPTICA*, and a full 12 nominations and 5 wins for the Mexican blockbuster *SEXO, PUDOR Y LAGRIMAS*. He served as co-producer on *SANTANÁS*, a film recognized with one Ariel nomination, and on *CRONICA DE UN DESAYUNO*, a film recognized with 9 Ariel nominations, 2 Ariel wins, a win at the Berlin International Film Festival and at the Guadalajara Mexican Film Festival.



MIGUEL ANGEL BOCCALONI : PRODUCER

Miguel was born in Guadalajara, Mexico and immigrated to the United States as a teen. He studied international economics at the undergraduate level and applied economics at the graduate level at San Diego State University, where he served as a graduate researcher and teaching associate. He designed the accounting and financial structure for *AMAR A MORIR*, and helped establish its production entity, Laguna Pictures, in order to secure film investments and newly created Mexican tax incentives to help finance the film. He prepared economic projections for prospective investors and teamed up with the film's director to negotiate distribution agreements, national and international co-production agreements, and all talent agreements. He maintained cash flow to the set while in production, and produced all reshoots and ADRs. Miguel contributed creatively to the marketing campaign of the film and to the creation of *AMAR A MORIR*'s movie website.



PAULA JARAMILLO: CO-PRODUCER

Film producer and film publicist Paula Jaramillo studied film and television production at Centro de Estudios del Video in Madrid. She began her professional career as a broadcast journalist and news presenter in her native Colombia. She subsequently worked as a communications officer in the office of Colombian President Andrés Pastrana, and later created the Department of Communications and Public Relations at RCN Television, Colombia's premiere television network. She is currently Founding Director of Grupo Trébol Comunicaciones, a media consulting firm specializing in publicity and film distribution. She developed the



highly successful marketing and publicity campaigns for the motion pictures ROSARIO TIJERAS (winner of the Cartagena Film Festival Cinema Award for Best Colombian Film and a nominee for both the Mexican Ariel Award and the Goya Award, Spain's Academy Award); SATANÁS (winner of the Cartagena Film Festival Cinema Award for Best Colombian Film and a nominee for the Mexican Ariel Best Film Award); and PARAISO TRAVEL, winner of the Audience Award and Jury Award for Best Film at the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival. In her role as Co-Producer, she recently completed work on three indie films, which will premiere in 2009: FEDERAL directed by Erik de Castro; CHANCE directed by Abner Benaim; and AMAR A MORIR.

MASANOBU TAKAYANAGI: DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Takayanagi relocated from his home in Tamioka City, Japan to Los Angeles to study cinematography at the American Film Institute, one of the premiere cinematography programs in the United States today, where he was granted an M.F.A. degree. His cinematography work on his AFI, Cantonese language thesis film, SHUI HEN, won him the 2003 American Society of Cinematographers Heritage Award and the 2003 Palm Springs International Short Film Festival Award for Best Student Cinematography. He shot music videos for L.A.-based underground indie band Viva K and for Grammy Award-winning recording artists M.C. Hammer and Los Tigres del Norte. He shot 2nd unit photography on the



motion picture BABEL, for which director Alejandro González Iñárritu won a Best Director Oscar nomination. He recently completed 2nd unit photography on STATE OF PLAY, starring Ben Affleck, Rachel McAdams, and Academy Award winners Russell Crowe and Helen Mirren; and completed principal photography work on MISS JANUARY, starring Golden Globe Award-winning actress Kim Cattrall and Golden Globe Award-winning actor Brian Dennehy. He is set to lead principal photography on FLYING INTO LOVE, the story of JFK's assassination as told through First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's point of view, which will be directed by AFI graduate fellow Chris Raymond and star Academy Award winner Anna Paquin and Oscar-nominated actor James Cromwell.

MIKE PRICKETT: DIRECTOR OF UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY

Mike is an "extreme" director of photography from the North Shore of Hawaii. He has been shooting over water, underwater, and action sports photography for feature films, commercials and television for over 24 years. He's shot for CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox Sports, National Geographic, and The Learning Channel. He won the Emmy Award for his photography work on the ESPN surfing documentary, DOWN THE BARREL. Feature film credits include RIDING GIANTS; BILLABONG ODYSSEY; and X-MEN 2.



ALBERTO GONZALEZ REYNA: PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Alberto earned a B.A. in Architecture at Universidad Iberoamericana de Mexico in Mexico City and worked as a professional architect for six years before working as Set Designer and Construction Supervisor on the 1996 Sony-Tri Star release of *THE MASK OF ZORRO*. In 1998, he was accepted to the American Film Institute, where he later earned his M.F.A. in Production Design. He was awarded the Student Emmy for his production design on *UN PEDAZO DE TIERRA*, his graduate thesis film. He served as Assistant Art Director on the major motion picture releases of *ROCKY BALBOA*, starring Sylvester Stallone; *FOUR CHRISTMASSES* starring Vince Vaughn and Reese Witherspoon; and *STARSHIP TROOPERS 2*, directed by Phil Tippett, an Oscar-winning special effects specialist.



He is credited as Art Director on USA Network's Emmy Award-winning series *THE STARTER WIFE*, starring "Will and Grace" star Debra Messing; *TREMORS 3*; and *PSYCHO BEACH PARTY*, an official selection of the 2001 Sundance Film Festival; He was Production Designer on *AN EXISTENTIAL AFFAIR*, starring Academy Award winner Martin Landau, and on *SIETE DÍAS* (English title: *Seven Days*), which was awarded the Mexican Cinema Journalists Award for Best Direction and Best Film, and nominated for 5 Ariel Awards. He has worked on more than 50 national commercials in Mexico and the U.S.

RADU ION: EDITOR AND CO-PRODUCER

Radu is a native of Amsterdam, Holland. As an undergraduate, he studied film at The London International Film School. He relocated to Los Angeles in 2000 to study film editing at the American Film Institute (AFI), where he earned an M.F.A. degree. Prior to his editing work on *AMAR A MORIR*, Radu worked in motion picture advertising for Universal Pictures, Warner Brothers, and United Artists, and was entrusted with the creation of movie trailers for major motion picture releases directed by highly esteemed film directors. His trailer credits include, *VAN HELSING* directed by Stephen Sommers, director of *The Mummy*; *BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE* directed by Academy Award Winner Michael Moore; *THE BOURNE SUPREMACY* directed by Oscar-nominated director Paul Greengrass; *MEET THE FOCKERS* directed by Austin Powers director Jay Roach; *THE INTERPRETER* directed by Academy Award winner Sydney Pollack; *ALEXANDER* directed by Academy Award winner Oliver Stone; *2FAST 2FURIOUS* directed by Oscar-nominated director John Singleton; *INSIDE MAN* directed by Oscar-nominated director Spike Lee; *JARHEAD* directed by Academy Award winner Sam Mendes; and *THE BANK JOB* directed by Palme d'Or nominee Roger Donaldson. Radu was awarded the Key Art Award by the Hollywood Reporter for his work on the trailer for *ALMOST FAMOUS*. He was nominated for a Primetime Emmy in 2003 for his editing work on *THE 75TH ACADEMY AWARDS*. Prior to editing on *AMAR A MORIR*, he edited several low-budget feature films, including *THE DELIVERY*; *TWO ALTERCATIONS*; *DRIFTER*; and *BRUTAL*. Radu first collaborated with Lebrija when he, as a fellow AFI filmmaker, edited on Lebrija's thesis film, *FLIRTING WITH DEATH*.



EDWARD ROGERS: ORIGINAL MUSIC SCORING

Self-taught in both guitar and piano, and an avid songwriter since age 14, Edward studied music composition and music theory at Dartmouth College and at the University of Southern California. His film scoring credits include the 2008 Jason Statham hit, *THE BANK JOB*, and indie favorites *GUY IN ROW FIVE* and *ELVIS TOOK A BULLET*. He collaborated with legendary, Golden Globe-nominated jazz-trumpeter and film composer Terence Blanchard on the score for the Kurt Russell film *DARK BLUE*, directed by Academy Award-winning director Ron Shelton. He has written music for the most recognized, critically acclaimed television series of the decade, including Emmy Award-winning series *NYPD BLUE*; *LAW AND ORDER*; and *BROOKLYN SOUTH*.



Other television credits include the CBS telefilm *ROBERT LUDLUM'S COVERT ONE: THE HADES FACTOR* and the ESPN documentary *MORNINGS WITH SHIRLEY POVICH: A CENTURY OF WRITING SPORTS*. Keeping in touch with his Rock 'n Roll roots, Edward worked with Eddie Van Halen on the 1998 release of *VAN HALEN III*. He collaborated with Louisiana blues guitarist Sonny Landreth, an American Music Awards Instrumentalist of the Year, on his 2000 release, *LEEVE TOWN*.

MATT WATERS: SOUND EDITING AND SOUND DESIGN

Matt Waters was awarded the Motion Picture Sound Editors Golden Reel Award for his work on the television series *YOUNG HERCULES*, starring Ryan Gosling. His list of sound credits is extensive, including work on the Fox TV series *PRISON BREAK*; the CBS-TV series *COLD CASE*; and the feature film, *THE WEDDING PLANNER*, starring Jennifer Lopez and Matthew McConaughey.



PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

FROM
WRITER-PRODUCER HARRISON REINER

Promoting Diversity in the Industry and How I Came to Make a Film with My Former Student, Fernando Lebrija:

Early in my tenure working in film and television, I was struck by the underrepresentation of minorities behind the camera, particularly true in writing, directing, and producing. Over time, I developed a stronger and stronger interest in promoting diversity where I saw little, and wanted to find a way to respond to the need that I saw, to help where I could to better able young minority film and television makers to have more of a voice in film and TV.

I began my work in diversity at the Hollywood Black Film Festival, where I created a writing workshop to which emerging African-American writers could come and pitch their stories, develop their screenplays, and gain some insight into navigating an often times confounding industry. After two years of working with the Hollywood Black Film Festival, where I continue to work today, I was approached by one of my Latino U.C.L.A. students, who asked me: "Why don't you help out Latinos?" Frequently, throughout my life, it was a Latino man or woman who helped me somehow in a time of need, whether it was securing me a graduate school loan, helping me along in my career, rushing me to an emergency room when I was injured or sick, or being a sympathetic ear in times of grief. I was somewhat at a loss for words when my student asked me why I hadn't found a way to give back to the very community who'd always been there for me. Javier, my student, suggested I meet his then boss, Edward James Olmos (Oscar-nominated for his performance in *STAND AND DELIVER* and founder of the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival). And so we met, and from my meeting with Mr. Olmos and the executive director of his film festival was born a screenwriting workshop for Latino student writers, writer-directors, and writer-producers already in film school. The notion was to give these writers and writer hyphenates a leg-up as they were coming through or finishing film school by working with them to develop viable, compelling stories for the big and small screen, and providing them the opportunity to meet, network with, and seek good guidance from accomplished film and television makers.

I worked with the children of Desi Arnaz to name the workshop, which would be based at the Festival, after their dad, a Latino man who contributed greatly to the entertainment industry. Many people don't know that Desi was very active in developing television shows and had a great mind for story and developed three-camera television technology. If I was doing this in Desi's name, I decided to make it competitive, to find the best of the best. I scoured the film schools of the country and with the support of HBO Latino brought all these young, bright Latino screenwriting students to Los Angeles to develop stories for motion pictures and telefilms. I told them their greater opportunity will come if they commit themselves and discipline themselves to telling and crafting stories as good as, if not better, than non-Latinos already working in the business. If you do good work, and you work hard, I told them, you will find work. These young writers and I burned the midnight oil seven nights a week, and in just two and a half weeks' time, they had to construct well-developed stories in treatment form, which would then be judged by esteemed industry professionals. The best stories would be nominated for the Desi Arnaz Memorial Scholarship Award for Best Story for a Motion Picture or Telefilm.

In the second year of the workshop, with the start of the Desi Arnaz workshop soon at hand, with 15 writers already chosen from a pool of nearly 250 applicants, I get this call from Mexico. It's one of the filmmakers accepted to the workshop. It's Fernando. He tells me his best friend is getting married, in Mexico. He wants to know if he can come to the workshop a couple of days late.

I felt badly. How can I tell a guy to miss his best friend's wedding? But the rules of the competition required all participating writers to be present for the entire workshop. I told Fernando it would not be possible. I hung up the phone, I felt awful. I could hear how badly he wanted to attend, but the rules of the workshop had been set and published. Fernando calls me back and tells me he's coming. He's not going to his friend's wedding.

Fernando comes to the workshop, he's the quietest person in the room. What I realize now in hindsight is that he was the most attentive listener in the room, that he was absorbing all the knowledge he could, and therefore the quietest. As the workshop progressed, the usual border-crossing stories and quincenera stories were pitched. Then it's Fernando's turn. Fernando doesn't go small, he goes big, he stands out. He takes on the genre of historic epic. He's going to write a story about a great Aztec warrior who must battle Spanish invaders, intent on having power over the indigenous peoples of Mexico. I'm thinking no way is this guy going to pull off an historic epic in two and half weeks' time, no way, but I was compelled by the theme of the story which had to do with man's predisposition for violence, and the need to have power over others. Fernando's historic epic was, in fact, nominated by a formidable list of jurors for the Desi Arnaz Memorial Award for Best Story for a Motion Picture or Telefilm.

Fernando followed me to my U.C.L.A. story development workshop. He wanted to develop another kind of story, a lower budget story. I was at first disappointed that Fernando was not, for the time being, going to be doing further work on his historic epic. But Fernando was incredibly driven to make a first feature film and he had the wisdom to know finding financing, as a first-time feature film director, for this huge historic epic, was a near impossibility. Fernando is a dreamer, yes, but he's also a great pragmatist, which I think is exactly the kind of young filmmaker, who gets a first film made.

The story Fernando brought to the workshop was as compelling to me as his historic epic. It was the story for the movie *AMAR A MORIR*, a love story with edge that cut across socioeconomic class differences and shed light on racist elements in contemporary Mexican culture. I, as an American, was surprised to learn that a racism as insidious as that which still exists in the United States today on the part of some whites against blacks, also exists in Mexico. "Alejandro," the protagonist Fernando created, spoke to every instinct in me, to everything that interested me: the right to be free, the absolute human need to experience romantic love, the battle against men who are driven to have power over others, so driven that their ambitions destroy that which is good. Fernando's protagonist rejects corruption, rejects racism, and classist ways of thinking. It wasn't to me a "Mexican" story. The story was set in Mexico, it had the colors of Mexico in it, yes, but it very much dealt with issues and emotions that are universally relatable. I was interested.

Writing workshops are helpful, but with many writers vying for time, there never is the time, above and beyond giving notes, to really take the time to make a script sing, scene by scene, from beginning to end. Fernando realized as much, and he was ready to make this movie, and make it now. And so he invited me out for a bite to eat, and to my surprise, and as his teacher, it was the height of flattery to me when he asked me to be his creative producer, to help him write on the script, to be his second eyes in casting, in production, in music, and in editing. I think what will be Fernando's great success as a director is that he is a team-builder, and wants the second opinions of his team. And I think because each team member knows his or her opinion is wanted and valued, they're loyal and they're committed. So many people on the film worked for very little or nothing, and flew across borders to work with him, because they saw in Fernando a director who was more than talk, he was determined, a genuine collaborator, and he was so clearly making every effort to do good, honest work.

The road was longer and harder than we first imagined with the loss of loved ones and investors coming in and out, but I would do it all over again, no hesitation at all. For me, it was the culmination of my work in diversity and in teaching, to mentor a young filmmaker right through to the completion of his film. And to this teacher, being able to do that, was one of the great rewards for all these years of teaching and mentoring and working in film and television.

I now relinquish my role as Fernando's mentor and teacher. He has shown himself with this film to have grown into a highly capable director, who's directed a film with great feeling and emotion, with intelligence, one that is suspenseful and conveys important ideas while still being entertaining. I thank Fernando for the great adventure he's taken me on with this film, even though it's taken me through sweltering jungles where drug lords roam. Finally, I would like to publicly apologize to Fernando's friend for making Fernando miss his wedding.

MAIN CREDITS

PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY
FERNANDO LEBRIJA

STORY BY
FERNANDO LEBRIJA

WRITTEN BY
FERNANDO LEBRIJA
HARRISON REINER

PRODUCERS
MATTHIAS EHRENBURG
HARRISON REINER
DAVID WISNIEVITZ
MIGUEL ÁNGEL BOCCALONI

CO-PRODUCERS
PAULA JARAMILLO
RADU ION

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
MARTIN BURILLO
PACO BURILLO

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
MASANOBU TAKAYANAGI

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
ALBERTO GONZALES-REYNA

EDITORS
RADU ION
PAULO CARBALLAR

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY
EDWARD ROGERS

COSTUME DESIGNER
LUPITA PEKINPAH

MAKEUP
OLGA TURRINI
ALFREDO MORA

ART DIRECTOR
RAYMUNDO "CYBER" CABRERA

SET DECORATION
ELOISA FERNANDEZ

CASTING
RENE PEREIRA
CARLA HOOL

SOUND DESIGNER
MATTHEW WATERS

MUSIC SUPERVISORS
MARK WIKE
HERMINIO GUTIERREZ

MUSIC EDITOR
ROBBIE ADAMS

**DIRECTOR OF WATER
PHOTOGRAPHY**
MIKE PRICKETT

SPECIAL FX
MARCELINO PACHECO

STUNT COORDINATOR
JUAN MANUEL VILCHIS

**POST-PRODUCTION
SUPERVISOR**
JOSH LOGAN

ORIGINAL SONG RECORDINGS

“HALLELUJAH”

Songwriter: LEONARD COHEN (BMI)
Sung by: JASON CASTRO
Producer: ROBBIE ADAMS
Courtesy of 19 Entertainment, Ltd.

“NO HAY FIN”

Written and sung by JIMENA ANGEL
Producer: SEBASTIAN KRYS
Courtesy of Universal Music Enterprises

“CORRIDO TIERRA DE TIGRES”

Songwriter: Francisco Quintero Ortega
Sung by: GRUPO EXTERMINADOR
Producer: Francisco Quintero Ortega
Courtesy of Fonovisa Records
Under license of Universal Music Enterprises

CAST

Alejandro Vizcaino.....	JOSÉ MARÍA DE TAVIRA
Rosa.....	MARTINA GARCÍA
El Tigre.....	ALBERTO ESTRELLA
Tiburón.....	RAÚL MÉNDEZ
Nick.....	CRAIG MCLACHLAN
Amalia.....	MAYRA SERBULO
Pancho.....	SILVERIO PALACIOS
Capitán Fernández.....	MIGUEL RODARTE
Flor.....	CATALINA LÓPEZ
Luis Ro.....	LUIS ROBERTO GUZMÁN
Ricardo Vizcaino.....	SERGIO JURADO
Rebeca Corcuera.....	JIMENA GUERRA
Patricia Vizcaino.....	RENATA RAMOS
Marcial.....	BENJAMIN MARTINEZ
Paco.....	JOSE ANTONIO GAONA
El Pelos.....	JOHN ARCHER
Paulino.....	MAURICIO QUINTANA
Senator Juarez.....	RENÉ CAMPERO
Sergeant Flores.....	JORGE BECERILL
Francisco Corcuera.....	FRANCISCO AVENDAÑO
Barbara Corcuera.....	PATRICIA ARCHER
Scott.....	ALEX BAKALARZ
Vaquero.....	DAVID RAMOS “EL VAQUERO”
Señor Juan Gonzalez.....	HERIBERTO DEL CASTILLO
Petra Gonzalez.....	SUSANA CONTRERAS
Father of rape victim.....	GABRIEL PASCUAL
Rita (rape victim).....	GUADALUPE SANCHEZ
Ciro the Mute.....	MANUEL PONCELIS

MOVIE STILL FROM AMAR A MORIR



José Mariá de Tavira (left) as "Alejandro" and Martina García (right) as "Rosa."



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