

LOS FANTASMAS DEL CARIBE

A film by Felipe Monroy

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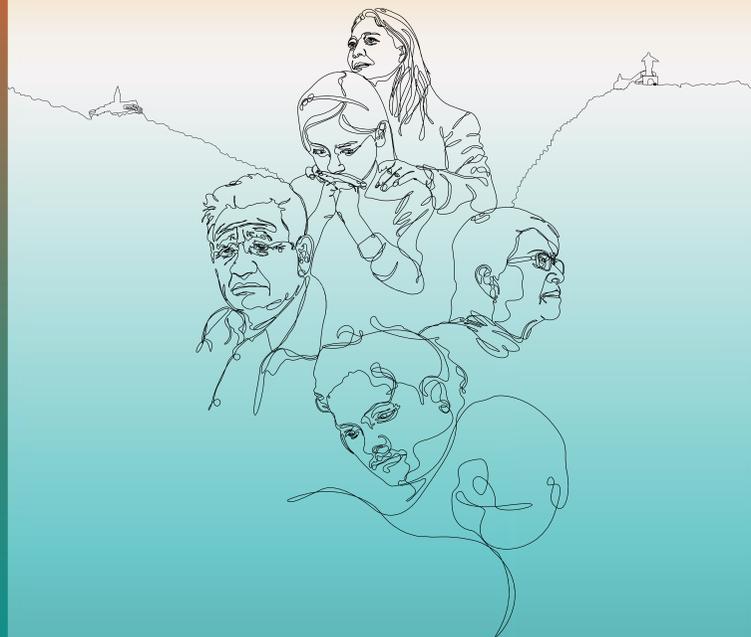
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Los Fantasma Del Caribe

Un film de Felipe Monroy

PRODUCTION ADOK FILMS, JOSE M. DEL BUIHE (PRD) - ADOK - COPRODUCTION CONGLUO CASTELLANOS FILMS, PULLI GARDUUE LAZARUE - PRODUCTEUR ASSOCIÉ FUNDACION CAMARAS ESCOLARES DE L'INCO CAVALLE - ECRITURE ET REALISATION : FELIPE MONROY - IMAGE ANIMADA ALU - MONTAGE : FELIPE MONROY - ASPECTE DE COULEUR : MONROY - SONORITE : FELIPE MONROY - SOUND DESIGN : FUMASO GARCIA - HUIJIBUO - PREMIER ASSISTANT REALISATEUR : FELIPE GARRERA - POSTPRODUCTION IMAGE : CIELO DRAUTU MACQUEAN
AVEC LA PARTICIPATION DE L'EDITION OFFICIELLE SONTIEN DE LA LOTERIE ROMANDE DE PROMOTEUR DE LA CULTURE BELGE (ROTT) ET EN QUELQUE SORTE UNITE DES FILMS
UN FILM COMPOSE DE 100% DE FILMS ANIMES ET DE LA FORTIFICATION DES ARTISTES ET DES SAGES POLYGLOTES.





synopsis

Felipe Monroy, a Colombian director based in Geneva, continues his work on the memory of his country with this new film, *Los Fantasmas Del Caribe*. Back in Bogotá after many years away, he takes on the task of revisiting his family's past, one tinged with a violence which echoes that of an entire nation.

With the FARC-government peace process perhaps about to turn the page on over 50 years of war, the director begins his own reconciliation effort, the result and instrument of which both being this film.

What to do with poorly-healed wounds? And what role can film play in the perilous exercise that is forgiveness? It is simultaneously as son, brother, Colombian and filmmaker that Felipe Monroy tackles these questions and there lies the beauty of the film: it manages to look the ghosts of the past straight in the eyes, to own the contradictory feelings the story arouses in its author and to invite us to share.

director's notes

'LOS FANTASMAS DEL CARIBE' paints the intimate portrait of a Colombian family, mine, a family of the most modest fringe of the middle class. It is the portrait of my father, of my mother, of my sister and of myself, we who have lived through a dark period, marked by the violence of drug trafficking during the 80s and the beginning of the 90s, when the country was under the rule of Pablo Escobar, chief of the Medellin cartel, and of his death squads.

Through this film I wanted to recount both the here and now of my family and the memories of my childhood : those that come back to me and the memories of my relatives. It is an attempt at exploration but also a reconstruction of memory. Mine, theirs and that of the country. How did we live, growing up in a city where every day booby-trapped cars exploded ? How to be a father, a mother, a brother a sister or a family in such circumstances ? How did this past, whether evoked or forgotten, affect the personal life of the protagonists, their family life, their social life, those of their relatives or of their peers ?

In this film I wanted to revive the past, as our ancestors did, through oral tradition, through accounts, tales or myths. I wanted to invent a cinematographic device against amnesia, one which stimulated the work of memory.

One can sometimes observe, visible on our bodies, marks of our history. But I am also convinced that other traces remain concealed, buried inside, dissolved in the invisible, hidden in silences, in the impossibility of speaking. Sometimes looks, faces, gestures and bodies let us glimpse for an instant this buried world. I wanted to make a film which oriented itself around this anchor point, beginning with the exploration of the skin of the people I love : my mother, my father, my sister. I sought to render visible what these traces reveal, what these marks say but also what the silences hide, the absences, the empty spaces, the evasions.



There are these memories which one no longer knows how to reach and one thinks no longer reach us or affect us. It is these memories that I wanted to awaken.

In painting the portrait of my family members, I wanted to recount the life force, the courage which always pushed them to fight in extreme situations, the shared loved, which each felt for the other despite the pains and difficulties. But I wanted also to speak of the ruptures, the conflicts, partly caused by the social and political context of the country. I wanted to speak of the absence of my father, a homeless drug addict whom I saw only very few times during my childhood, of the solitude and the bitterness of my mother who found herself raising three children on her own, sometimes without having anything to feed them, the verbal and physical aggressions which she inflicted on us, of the anger which, still today, takes hold of my sister when she remembers those aggressions, and of my uprooting when, sad and hopeless, I decided to leave Colombia and never to return, preferring the life of an illegal immigrant in Europe.

At the heart of my film, I reserve a primordial place to my father, Jorge, and to my relationship with him. His absence when I was a child is the starting point which triggers the work of my memory. With him, first, I tried to assemble the scattered pieces of our family history's puzzle, recall the memories, dream the missing images, create new ones, face also his refusal sometimes to look back and to speak about the familial and personal past. With him, I thought up devices, invented circumstances, set up occasions to bypass this refusal. I lead him on the sensitive path of his emotionally-charged evocations.

I feel a crazy fascination for this man and the way in which he tells the story of his life, his fifteen years in prison and his over twenty years of vagabonding in the street, looking for his food in rubbish bins. His surrealistic tales sometimes have the colour of the best magical realism of the writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Through my father's story, that of my mother, Victoria, unveils itself. An indigenous woman who, at 14, crossed the country alone, from the jungle of Putumayo in the south of Colombia to the cold mountains of the capital Bogotá. My mother, unlike my father, had great difficulty in speaking about her past. Very quickly her face would take on an expression of deep pain, her eyes filling with tears, tears of anger and frustration. She would break down and request that I stop asking her questions. She is a very strong woman who has had the courage not to end her days, despite the suicidal thoughts she has had on a number of occasions. She did not want to leave us alone, my sisters and me.

Also appearing in the film are my sister Adriana and myself, the youngest, living in exile in Switzerland for the last seven years.

I have acquired by now a certain distance which allows me to look back and to understand how I learnt to live with all this, to live with all of this in Switzerland. This distance allows me also to understand how the outlook I have on my family and on my country have changed since I left.

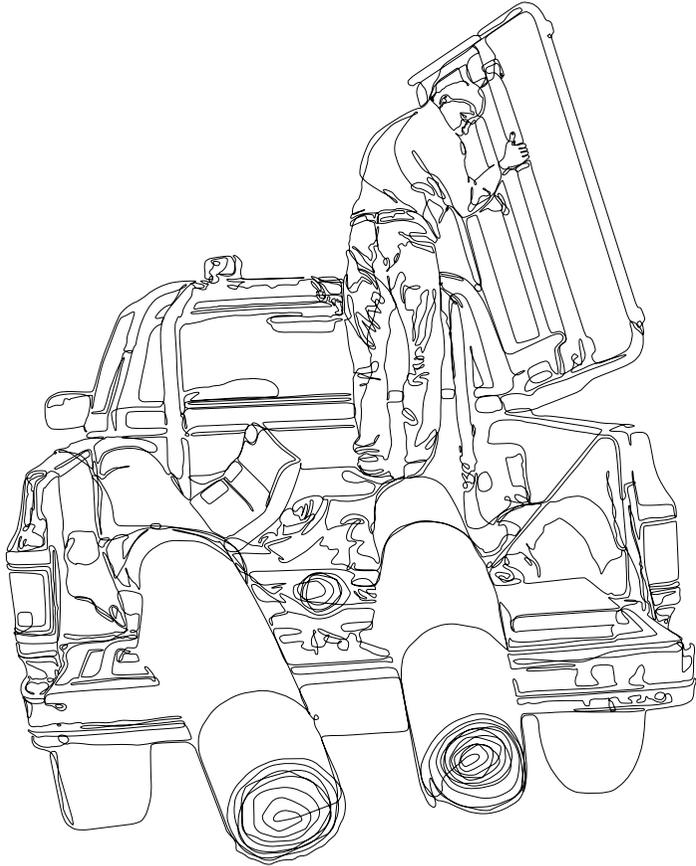
My film does not boil down to the portrait of my family but through this portrait, in recalling the twists and turns we went through, in observing the scars, it offers a glimpse at a larger picture evoking the story of all the modest Colombian families which have, in a state of precariousness and danger, gone through the bloody years of the drug-trafficking war in Colombia. A war which devastated the personal lives of each of the protagonists, as it did that of each Colombian citizen, hurt them, hardened their relationships, altered their confidence and compelled them to carry out extreme actions.

The film evokes what is left of the neighbourhood in Bogotá where my father spent three quarters of his life, of what is left of the Pablo-Escobar era Colombia.

This film is not a settling of debts with my parents or a value judgment on Colombian society. I hope to have paid homage to those who build us and live in us, often despite ourselves, to the life force which exists in each and every one of us.

'LOS FANTASMAS DEL CARIBE' is the continuation of a project I am developing as director around the memory of my country. My first full-feature documentary, 'Tacacho', which spoke about the victims displaced by the violence of armed conflict, was the beginning of a series of investigations and preoccupations which live in me as a Colombian and as a director. For me, it is necessary to speak about all the things that one is not or should not say. We Colombians have a tendency to push recollections to the back of our memory, to mask the past and poorly-healed wounds. I think that, in shining a specific light on past events, film can give them a meaning, a legibility, it can allow us to appropriate the past and exorcise its ghosts. In revisiting here my family's past, my own, in evoking with my father, my mother and my sister the twists and turns as well as the risks taken, I shine a light which renders legible a part of our family history and beyond this single example, a part of the country's history.

the characters



JORGE

Jorge comes from a very humble family. His mother abandoned him at birth in the house where she worked as a cleaning lady. The victim of rape at the age of 13 by her employer, she entrusts one of the sisters of her aggressor with the care of her child. The man never recognised my father. He would finally admit to being the father on his deathbed and advise him never to touch any drugs. This late revelation, despite everything, would mark the beginning of a life to which delinquency and drugs would give the beat. Jorge would spend a good portion of his life in prison where he would finish nonetheless his studies and become a professor of mathematics. Following his release from prison, he tried to free himself from his addiction but it always held him.

Today Jorge is a man of sixty, of small stature, with emerald green eyes. He is a little chubby and his voice is grating like a duck's. He is a gifted mathematician who passed his baccalaureate and learnt mathematics in the different prisons of Colombia where he was locked up for minor offences : instances of theft, burglary, fraud, etc. Crack has by now stolen his teeth and he wears dentures, often badly glued, which escapes his mouth by accident or when he is playing with them to make funny faces. A former drug addict, it is in the street that he spent nearly 30 years of his life, in El Cartucho in particular, very well-known in the 1990s for having been the most dangerous street in the world, in the most dangerous city in the world: Bogotá. In this neighbourhood there lived at the time 6,000 men and women like him, in inhuman conditions, because of their addiction to crack. Jorge now works in the evangelist church for the homeless of El Cartucho. He became a priest despite his hilarious sense of irony, his overflowing sarcasm and the incredible distance with which he talks about himself and his life.

This man is my father. A father whom I saw only very rarely during my childhood and with whom I lived only a few months when I was a teenager. Few memories come to mind when I try to think of him. Rather, what does come to mind is the terrible anxiety of knowing he was out, when Pablo Escobar had declared war against the Colombian government and that booby-trapped cars were exploding every day in the streets. When he would disappear, it would be for years. Each time, we would think he had died but he would always end up calling from a different city or rehabilitation centre.

I've seen my father only twice in the last seven years. The first time, in 2007, when I was leaving to Switzerland. He cried of joy knowing that somewhere my dreams would come true, despite not knowing exactly what the dreams were. At first, he thought I wanted to work in photography.

He then understood that it was something to do with video. He even encouraged me, thinking that I could earn a good living by filming weddings, first communions, birthdays. He imagined that I lived in Sweden :

- 'Hi Son, how's it going in Sweden ?'
- 'No, Dad, it's Switzerland.'
- 'Haaaa ! Yes, yes, yes, Sweden.'
- 'No, Dad, *Switzerland*, Switzerland.'

Then we saw each other again when I was shooting my first full-feature documentary 'Tacacho'. He came with my mother to the depths of the Colombian jungle to support me and help me carry equipment.

For three days, I rediscovered this man, animated by an incredible life force. Stunned, I listened to the hidden stories behind numerous disappearances. His eyes would fill with tears, his cheeks would blush with shame, his humanity would fill the room while his surrealistic tales would transport me to unimaginable places. When my mother would tell her version of events, childhood memories, marked by the violence inflicted on the entire country by the Medellin cartel, would awaken in me. This same violence which transpired daily at home when my sisters and I watched, worried, for the return of our mother who had to cross the city to come home from work.

The relationship I maintain with my father is very fragile because the pain of the past is liable to erupt at any moment. That of a son who was abandoned by his father and who has to face the man who inflicted so much pain on his family. I know that with him one must be able to act quickly, think objectively and put things into perspective. Despite these conflicts, our physical rapport is very unusual. When we are together, an eight-year-old child awakens in me : I sit down on his lap, I play with his face, I climb on his back and he lets me do so without saying anything. Often, he even falls asleep with his mouth open when I stroke his hair. I tried to show the proofs of our singular love in front of the camera, but also the fragility which governs human relationships, our ambivalences, our contradictions, the love and hate one can feel simultaneously for someone close to us.

Following my departure for Switzerland and despite the distance, the relationship I maintain with my father has become stronger. He has learnt to use Skype and write e-mails. Sharing our experiences is a difficult task : how to make him understand the context of my life here and how to understand his ? We are two islands which are becoming closer after an intense shift of tectonic plates.

Jorge dedicated his moments of lucidity to helping the homeless population addicted to drugs. That he fought against all sorts of injustices of which the residents in the neighbourhood were victims is an important aspect of his character. It seems interesting to me to dig so as to know the intentions which animate this man and keep him in touch with El Cartucho.

Jorge is an extremely generous character who is, somehow, very proud to tell his tales to the world and be at the same time a survivor but also a martyr. He has created an almost unbelievable distance with his own story, he has become so detached that each of his experiences becomes a joke at which he himself laughs. He affords himself no pity, speaks of himself in the third person and any comment he makes about himself is ironic.

But when it comes to comparing his life stories with those of my family, his mind draws a blank; suddenly, he is embarrassed, impossible for him to cope with the pain and bitterness which draw themselves on my mother's face, my sister's hate or the tears of rage that flow from my eyes. His memories become murky and he no longer remembers anything.

FELIPE

I was born in 1983 in Bogotá. My mother, originally from an indigenous community in Putumayo, raised three children on her own. I did not meet my father before my teenage years. Addicted to crack, he lived on the street in Bogotá in the shanty town of El Cartucho. I passed my bac at the age of 16 but was unable to pursue tertiary studies because I had to earn a living. So I became a DJ in different nightclubs in Bogotá. During this decade of nightlife, I was confronted with a number of very violent experiences which forever shaped me. Nevertheless, I always dreamt of film. And when I met people with whom I was able to travel to Europe, I jumped on the opportunity to my dream of beginning film studies come true.

Once my tourist visa expired, I stay on clandestinely in Geneva. Signed up at the Geneva University of Art and Design, I was undocumented. The state of Geneva ordered me to leave the territory a number of times. During this period, I survived thanks to all sorts of little unstable and gruelling jobs, always driven by my desire to make films. My situation regularised itself in December 2010 thanks to a federal partnership with my boyfriend. I was able then to dedicate all my energy to directing my films. Very quickly, the documentary medium attracted me and it is at the heart of this cinematographic writing that I found my path. It has been over ten years since I left my home to live in Geneva. Of course, my relationship with Colombia has radically changed. I partially lost my mother tongue to adopt a new one. My outlook, previously anchored in the context of Bogotá, has broadened to take in more vast a panorama.

From abroad, I have been able to understand the picture of a Columbia at war, carting around its millions of victims, but also a country without memory or history. My preoccupations and uncertainties have become stronger as has my desire and commitment as a moviemaker, Colombian citizen residing in Switzerland. I thus became a stranger to my own country. An exercise of readaptation to the dynamic of Colombia is necessary each time I return to my country. It transpires in my body language, in my way of communicating, of approaching others and the way in which others perceive me. Paradoxically, the relationship with my family has become tighter. The distance has strengthened our ties. Despite my criticisms and self-criticisms becoming firmer and more radical, my departure allowed the emergence of a space of digestion vis-à-vis my family.





VICTORIA

Vicky is a 67-year-old woman who is originally from an indigenous community in the south of Colombia, the 'Ingas'. At 14 she left the hut where she lived with her large family, in the depths of the jungle.

Tired of her father's abuse, she set out on the long road to the country's capital, Bogotá. During the journey, before reaching the 'star of the Andes', she would see all the hardness of life and the cruelty of man.

She headed then to the Pacific coast and during the crossing she became pregnant with my sister Adriana. But because of the violence of this man, the father of my older sister, she fled once more, fearing he might end up killing both her and her daughter. Vicky left the child in the care of her family in Mocoa and took again to the road. This time, she managed to reach the capital and began to send money to her family and to her baby girl. But life did not give her any slack and in Bogotá she had to demonstrate courage, patience and endurance. After living through many sordid jobs and in the most terrifying of instability, she met Jorge, my father.

They met at night school, where my mother was catching up on her primary school education. This man was handsome and his eyes were green like emeralds, he recounted how he came from a life of misery and drug addiction but that Jesus had saved him and today he was a new man. At the end of his account he approached her and told her with a candid smile : 'One day I will marry you'.

period of suffering was far from over. At the beginning of her marriage, things seemed to be going in the right direction, she feasted on hope and the prospect of projects to come. But very quickly, everything fell apart and dad fell back into crack. It was the beginning of the apocalypse. Her life fell apart once more, her dreams became frustrations and her hopes transformed themselves into tears and anxieties. She travelled the country, placing her husband Jorge in numerous rehabilitation centres, trying to save the father and his children, so they need not grow up without him. Her efforts proved fruitless and her meagre savings began to disappear.

It was the beginning of a period of insecurity during which the whole family would know hunger ; my sisters and I would wear the clothes and shoes which the children of mum's rich clients did not want to wear anymore, because they were stained or already tatty.

At this time, Pablo Escobar's war broke out and the country drowned in a bloodbath.

Mum's smile would disappear for a few years.

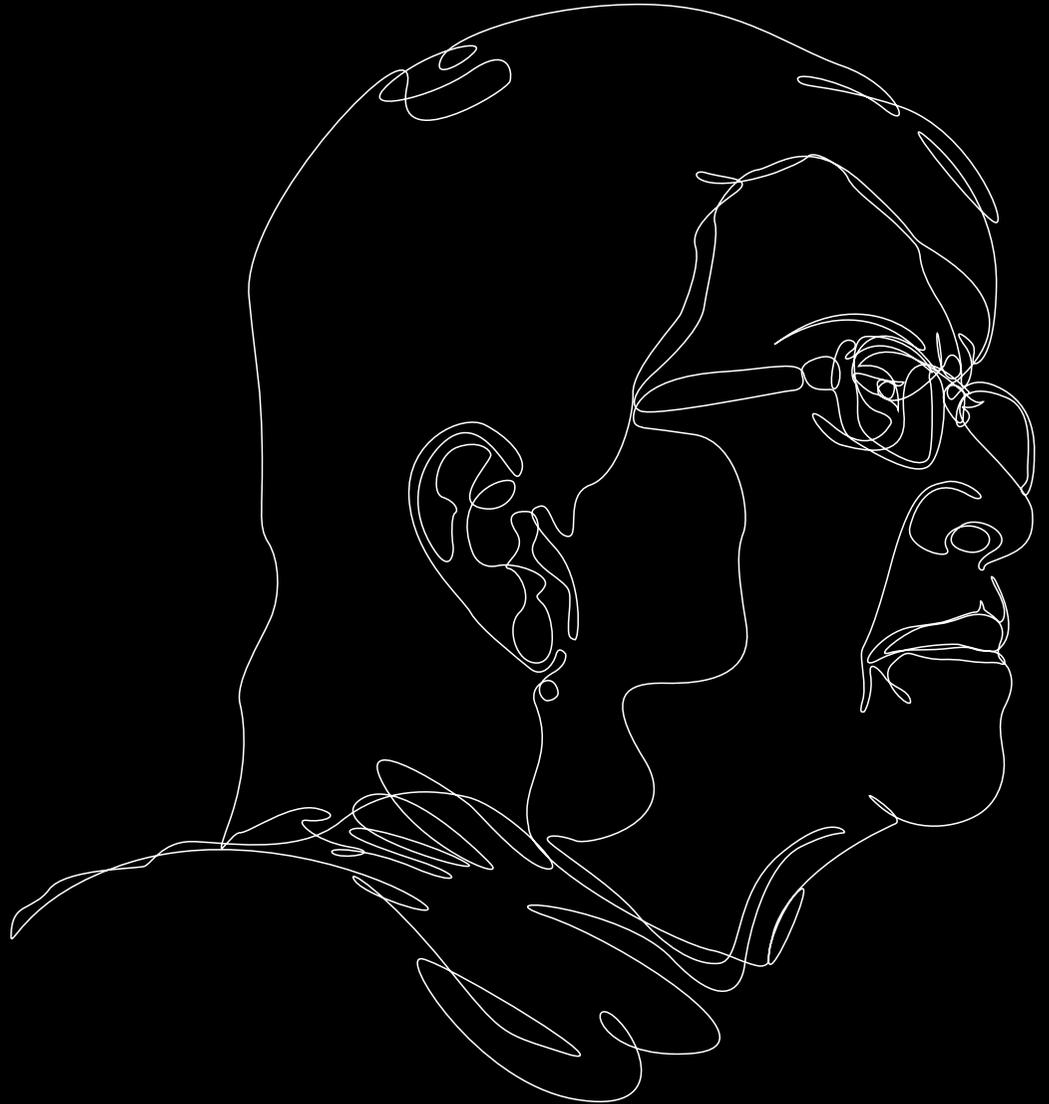
My sisters and I, we would wait at home. Sometimes in the distance, we could hear the sound of explosions or see the windows of the house rattle. Me, I looked out the window waiting for my mother's return and in the evening I would huddle together with my sisters in front of the television to watch the news and see a list of the dead and injured. At last, my mother would come home tired from her day's work, sometimes also angry and very irritable. No one had taught her how to manage her impulses and, as a child, the only thing she had received from her father were insults and humiliation. Sadly for us, mum had reproduced the same schema to educate us, because it was the only way she knew.

The price of her frustration left deep marks on my sisters and me. She says she does not remember these things, at least not like that.

She would become violent and very aggressive, incomprehensible, paranoid. Reality seemed to distance itself from her everyday a little more. She battled relentlessly to cling onto sanity. Then she ended up getting back on her feet and becoming a work horse despite the bombs exploding outside. She would go out every morning with the heavy bag in which she carried her hairdressing, manicure and pedicure tools, to beautify her clients in the Jewish community who lived in the wealthy neighbourhoods, north of Bogotá.

This work horse, we would see her only very rarely, Sundays at church or before she would retire completely at Christmas parties with sleeping pills, trying to forget her frustration and knowing that this Christmas once again, there would be no presents or turkey for her children. She would leave a plate with the leftover cuts of ham and cheese she would buy in the store where the wealthy shopped, or if she were lucky, one of her clients would have given her a leg of turkey which we would share between the three of us, three because she would not be there. We would hear her crying during minutes then... silence.

Today, at 67, my mother still wears her heavy backpack. She has found her smile once more, 'thanks to Jesus' she says, but traces of the sad years will forever remain in the wrinkles on her face, in the depths of her beautiful brown eyes and in the few tears she still sheds when we bring up with past.





Mum left her child, my sister, in the care of her parents and departed for Bogotá. So Adriana grew up with my grandparents in Mocoa, in the jungle. They lived in modest conditions, but the land gave them food and the river its fish and water.

Surrounded by eight other children, my cousins, Adriana grew up among joy and games. My grandfather tried to compensate for the pain he had inflicted on my mother by lavishing Adriana with attention and love.

She saw our mother very little during her childhood. Indeed, she had created no ties with my sister and my sister resented her for this. 'Who is this woman who appears once a year? And what does she want from me? That I receive her with open arms?' my sister told me, the last time I went to Colombia to scout locations for the film.

One day my mother announced to her by telegram that she had got married, which hurt my sister badly. She felt excluded, no longer a part of mum's life.

Then we were born, my sister Maria Andrea and I. Vicky asked her family in Mocoa to send Adriana to help in the house and take care of the children in Bogotá.

Adriana who had stayed in the region of Putumayo, would come at the age of 15 to take care of my sister Andrea and me.

Her life would completely change. Gone would be the days of childhood, climbing in trees, fishing in the river, hunting in the forest; and, worst of all, henceforth she would be living far from her grandparents whom she loved like parents.

She left to live in the capital with a woman who was more a stranger than her own mother. She left to become a cleaning lady and babysitter of the woman's children. She left for a life and a city of misery, her life would transform into a nightmare.

Right upon her arrival in Bogotá, she would know the tragedy of abuse from a man without scruples. But that would only be the beginning of her misfortune. My mother would become hateful and let off steam – through verbal and physical violence – against my sister. She would insult her with strong language, calling her a prostitute, telling her she was no longer her daughter, that for her, she was already dead as she dragged her all around the house by her long black hair.

Despite this, I never heard my sister speak badly of my mother. A strange feeling took hold of her, reminiscent of Stockholm syndrome, making her love her aggressor. After all it was her mother and she only had one, she was also the only family she had left in this city of horrors. She would seek without success to be loved by this woman and never lose hope, still to this day.

When my mother wanted to beat us, Adriana would put herself in her way and would take the blows in our stead. She protected us and had to raise us, because we saw very little of our mother, because of her work.

She became a beautician, having learnt the trade in Paris, a city where she was able to travel thanks to a job as an au pair, at the end of the 80s, for two years.

Back in Colombia, she practiced her new profession with my mother's wealthy clients and in luxury hotels.

But she never strayed from us, she was always there, to accompany us in the difficult times of our childhood with Vicky. She loved us like her own children, maybe because at 20, she had already undergone a number of abortions and her doctors had stated it would be a miracle if one day she was able to have children. But miracles happen.

At 32 she became pregnant and had a precious princess she called Sofia. Seven years have passed and, as a single mother, she continues to fight with doggedness to put food in her angel's plate. She lives a very humble life and teaches her daughter to live an uncertain but honest life. I have never seen a mother show so much love for her daughter.

Adriana keeps a radiant smile on her lips. Her enormous chestnut eyes always sparkle like those of a child. She is a loving and tender woman and, despite the fact that I am thirty, I remain forever her beloved little brother.

EL CARTUCHO AND CRACK

At the beginning of the 80s, Colombia had become the biggest exporter of cocaine the world had ever known.

At the same time, consumption and the market for cocaine inside the country remained very weak. Cocaine was then considered a drug for the wealthy and especially a means to poison the 'gringos'; the majority of Colombians did not buy the stuff.

Once the alkaloid was made, there remained a yellow base that one threw out and it was difficult to get rid of it without leaving any trace.

Chemists working for drug traffickers then noted that the base which remained was a very powerful, mood-enhancing and hallucinogenic drug: crack. By means of a process requiring very little economic investment – because all one needed to do was to mix this base with sulfuric acid and ether – it was possible to make a powerful drug in great quantity, which not only resolved the problem of residue but also allowed drug lords to reap more profits.

But to whom could one sell it? 'Gringos' only wanted coke and exporting crack did not generate great profits; it would require taking on great risks for very little pay off.

The substance would then be destined for local consumers. The people from the lower-middle classes, and even the wealthy in Colombia, did not escape the siren call of crack.

But, however powerful, crack is a very ephemeral drug. Its effect lasts only a few minutes and the consumer sees themselves obliged to take ever more.

Crack is highly addictive and pushes people to consume it frenetically. Consumers often lose any notion of time, all their bearings and tend to distance themselves from their social life, to marginalise themselves.



They create then intra-communities where they can be together and consume relentlessly; and so were formed in the city of Bogotá whole neighbourhoods, places where people consumed, known under the name of 'Ollas' or 'saucepans': micro cities in the city, with their own laws and life systems, far from all socially accepted norms.

Among these places, an emblematic street, 'El Cartucho', in Bogotá, had the reputation of being the most dangerous neighbourhood in the world.

El Cartucho was a neighbourhood where 6,000 homeless people lived. It was the largest drugs and weapons distribution centre in Bogotá during the 1980s and 1990s.

After a firm policy to take back public spaces mandated by the city starting in the 2000s, the neighbourhood has been literally razed to the ground. But before the renovation work began, a series of massacres were perpetrated decimating the homeless population. These acts of barbarism were committed by police reserves known under the name of the 'Mano Negra' (black hand) or 'Limpieza Social' (social cleansing).

At the time, my father lived in this neighbourhood as a homeless person. He was witness to and victim of malicious acts by the police and of these death squads. Sometimes, the murderers even asked my father to transport the bodies in rubbish bins to make them disappear.

This man lived rubbing shoulders with death each moment of his life. Today, the sale and consumption of drugs has spread to different areas in the centre of the capital, in particular in three concentrations: 'The Bronx', 'The L' and 'Santa Fe'.

Despite their being separated geographically, these neighbourhoods are subject to the same modes and operating codes as the former Cartucho, that is their structures, their organisation and their hierarchy reproduce the principles applied by the former gang leaders.

Bogotá is a city where over twelve million people live but according to the 'official' census, only seven million people live in the capital of Colombia.

Among these statistics are not included the millions of farmers who have flooded into the city since the 80s, victims of forced displacement caused by the armed conflict (drug trafficking and civil war; paramilitaries, guerrillas and state crimes).

Most of these farmers have settled in the periphery of the city, in shanty towns where whole families live under the line of poverty, always under the threat of paramilitary militias who themselves have settled in these underprivileged neighbourhoods.

Bogotá is a city of contrasts and contradictions. According to Philippe Revelli: 'Being 20 in Bogotá, does it mean owning a mobile phone and a luxury car to cruise through the posh neighbourhoods of the city? Does it mean living in the streets of miserable neighbourhoods and ending up assassinated by paramilitary militias at the end of a raid turned bad? Does it mean leaving a middle-class family to join guerrilla movements occupying 'the mountain': the wooded hills of the country?'

If I continue to evoke all this, it is because the picture of the Colombian capital has not changed much, except in appearance, since these years, the years of Escobar, the years of my childhood.

Bogotá is a dangerous chameleon who manages to mask the tragic reality of yesterday and today's Colombia.

The urbanism policies and the layout of the city contribute to reducing the visibility of victims and rendering us, us citizens too, accomplices to this pernicious dynamic of forgetting.

Bogotá prewashed the blood of innocents fallen to the violence, erased it from its streets, removed it from its walls. It did it in 1948, when the city centre was burnt down and hundreds of people died there; it did it again when the M-19 guerrilla seized the law courts, when the Colombian government decided to put the building to fire and the sword, provoking disastrous consequences and hundreds of deaths and disappearances. It did it again when Pablo Escobar's booby-trapped cars were exploding, the result of which was bloodier still than the two previous examples. Today Bogotá is a city in full development. One sees there big shopping centres, Louis Vuitton and Prada shop windows, luxury neighbourhoods, flats whose value one calculates in the millions of dollars and not pesos. In these streets, armoured cars drive at top speed and people queue up to eat in gastronomical restaurants with exorbitant prices. Elsewhere, the remains of 'El Cartucho', recently bulldozed, have become a parking lot. The 'social cleansing' takes care of the remaining homeless people and paramilitaries reinsert into civil life the displaced who sell flowers or beg at red traffic lights. It is the city of new tourism, the city 'at 2,600 meters, the closest to the stars'.

But where has all the unwritten history of this city gone? Where have the cries of horror and the tears of victims gone? Maybe scraps remain in the eyes of my mother, in the misery of my father, in the sadness of my sister, in my own tears and my childhood memories.



bio-filmography



Felipe Monroy graduated from the HEAD (Haute Ecole d'Art et de Design; Geneva University of Art and Design) in the Department of Film Studies. He was born in Colombia and has lived in Switzerland for eight years. LOS FANTASMAS DEL CARIBE will be his third full-feature documentary.

2018 : Los Fantasmas del Caribe, doc. 89'
2015 : Meanwhile, in Beirut, doc. 70'
2013 : Tacacho, doc. 90'
2011 : Carla, doc. 15'.
2010 : Nos rêves vos Cauchemars, fiction 4', collection « la Faute à Rousseau »
2009 : Deux nuits et un jour d'amour, fiction 22'.
2008 : Pas un seul mot, fiction, 10'.

Ifdc crédits

LOS FANTASMAS DEL CARIBE

A film by Felipe Monroy

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Adok Films José Michel Buhler and Emilie Moor

Co-producers

Camille Laemle, Les Films d'Ici

Consuelo Castillo

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Fundacion Camara Oscura Giuliano Cavalli

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Yaël Bitton

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