

Trato de Novios

An Autopsy of Desire

PRESS KIT

*"Blends the gritty, dark storytelling of noir
with the raw, realistic approach of cinéma vérité,
creating a narrative that feels both intense and true to life."*



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LOGLINE

They call it *la vida* where desperation meets desire and neon paints the night. A disillusioned reporter resorts to murder when he falls in love with a prostitute, hoping to give them both a new beginning.

THEMATIC PREMISE

Everyone gets away with something even if it's just in the imagination.

PLOT PREMISE

There's a side to the city that prefers anonymity, that resists intrusion unless you're there on business. A reporter explores the everyday lives of sex workers and their clients in a series of candid interviews where nothing is off limits or off the record. At the same time an unknown assailant casually murders the owners of the brothels, one well placed bullet at a time.

SUMMARY / SYNOPSIS

The pessimism and desperation of *noir* meet the subversive authenticity of *cinéma vérité*. TRATO DE NOVIOS is a work of fiction that never veers far from the facts.

"Do you remember their faces," he asked.

"Do you remember ours," she replied.

There's a side to the city that prefers anonymity, that resists intrusion—unless, of course, you're there on business. Trato de Novios delivers an intimate portrait of a world devoid of intimacy, the world of sex-work. A reporter profiles the women and men whose lives intersect in the dingy rooms of the brothels and short term hotels that fill the central zone. For the owners of the brothels, business as usual takes a turn for the worse as blood spurts and gurgles from a hole in the forehead. Someone has a point to make—one well placed bullet at a time. Unflinchingly frank and raw, candid observations about the world of prostitution, as seen from both sides of the transaction, compete with graphic portrayals of premeditated murder narrated by the one who pulls the trigger. For the reporter enthusiasm for the story becomes obsession and then delusion when the futility of his endeavor finally hits home. For the *chica* at the center of the storm, a moment of genuine passion becomes the point of no return for them both. For the killer whose aim keeps getting better and better, there's always another target around the corner—there's no end in sight.

In this city most of the men are impotent but not the way you think. Most of the women are too. Wherever folks are denied what it is they really need, only one question remains. How far will they go to get it?

TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT - PROMO 1

The brutality and chaos of the city touch everyone, but not equally. No one opts out, but some find a way to cash in. The sign says *ABIERTO*. The door is always open. Her smile is as fake as her name.

A streetwise reporter, no stranger to the scene, profiles the men and women whose lives intersect in the dingy rooms of the brothels and short term hotels that fill the center of the city while an unnamed assailant casually murders the men—and women—who own the brothels, one well-placed bullet at a time. *Trato de Novios* tells the stories of the *chicas* who work the brothels downtown and the *tipos* who visit them—in their own words. Unfiltered. Uncensored. Unrepentant. Theirs is a vantage point like no other from which to consider just how far folks go to get what they really want in life and what they tell themselves to make it feel OK.

A young woman with long black hair and a short black skirt puts down a notebook and stands beside the others when a stranger enters the room. Her eyes and posture implore him. “Pick me, pick me.” The story about the reporter has to

wait. The murder spree goes on hold for a moment. A bus rumbles by outside the open door. A man grunts repeatedly in the room on the right as his bulging belly pummels the girl on the mattress and his sweat drips on her face, and nobody cares. “Everything's a means to an end,” she says in the morning when she gets up. She says something else too. “When the time is right, you take your best shot. You use whatever weapon you can get your hands on.”

I'M NOT YOURS ANYMORE - PROMO 2

Business is brisk where desperation meets desire and neon paints the night. Hit it, fool. That's what it's there for. No one says "no."

Until now.

Vice doesn't exist in a vacuum. It's a place where wants and needs collide—and collude. Buyer and seller have something in common. Each gets what he or she values most at the time of the transaction. Each gets what he or she went looking for that day. That's the secret to all relationships, business or otherwise.

He doesn't see it as a story about sex work. He sees it as a story about what folks are capable of when they want more than what they've got and all the ways they go about getting it. A streetwise reporter, no stranger to the scene, profiles the men and women whose lives intersect in the dingy rooms of the brothels and short term hotels that fill the center of the city. *Trato de Novios* tells the stories of the

chicas who work the brothels and the *tipos* who visit them—in their own words.

Unfiltered. Uncensored. Unrepentant.

The girls don't want your pity. It doesn't matter whether you approve or not. They thought it was sweet that someone cared. They won't tell him everything of course, just enough to get their point across. What they really think about men. How they see themselves. What it takes to do what they do. What matters and what doesn't and why.

The guys on the prowl? They get their shot of virility—the antidote to perpetual shame until it wears off and they find themselves back in the doorway again. They don't tell their moms or their girlfriends, but they tell each other. There's even a blog on Google. The girls are delighted when their names come up. It's great for business.

Pop. Pop. Pop. One on the sidewalk. One in the doorway. One behind the desk. Call it a Grand Slam. This is cinematic. And it's just the beginning.

Juana took the first one. Pepe was next. Then Carlos. Then Claudia across town. Then the media caught on, and things got crazy. But there was no stopping. Carlos Salazar. Diego Montemayor. Platón Sanchez. Reforma. (That was a triple—three in one block.) An unidentified assailant casually murders the owners of the brothels, one well placed bullet at a time.

¿Abierto?

Cerrado.

There is only one person who can tell this story the way it's meant to be told.

A young woman with long black hair and a short black skirt sits on a couch in front of a door open to the street. The parade of men subsides long enough for her to reach for a notebook and find the place where she left off. Delicate fingers fill page after page with impeccable longhand. Don't act shocked. Turns out she has a story to tell of her own—something about a reporter who won't give up and a murder spree that settles a score, something about succeeding when everything is against you. Want something badly enough? You'll do whatever it takes to get it. Nothing else stands a chance.

Where desperation meets desire and neon paints the night, the fine line between sex and violence gets easier to cross every time you try. Nothing says "I'm not yours anymore" like putting a bullet in the head of somebody who deserves it.

PAINFULLY ORDINARY - PROMO 3

“We don't go looking for men,” she began. “They come looking for us.”

The girls of the doorways, the *chicas* who provide *servicios* in the massage parlors and short term hotels that fill the center of the city—they don't lack for street cred. Where there's money, there's power. Where there's power, there's sex. Where there's sex, there's money. They know men better than men know

themselves. Does your penis need attention or your ego? Is one any different from the other?

The men on the prowl? Call them *vatos*, *tipos*, *morros*, *perros*, *carnales*. Call them what you will. The girls will tell you. “Men come in all shapes and sizes until they take their pants off. Then they’re all about one thing.” They’ll tell you something else too. “Men are stupid about sex. An erect penis is a great place to hang a leash. All you have to do is call them *corazón* or *cariño* or *amor* and they’ll give you all the money in their pocket. Well, you have to do a little more than that, but nothing real, nothing sincere, nothing that matters very much. Nothing you can’t do in your sleep.” The guys don’t even notice.

Trato de Novios tells the stories of the *chicas* who work the brothels downtown and the men who visit them—in their own words. Unfiltered. Uncensored. Unrepentant. A streetwise reporter, no stranger to the scene, sees a story that deserves to be told, a story that boldly defies what most folks want to believe is true.

To the girls prostitution isn’t some dead end, not today at least, not as long as they go home with a wad of cash in their hands. It isn’t an indignity—they get used to that, and they’ll tell you so. To the girls prostitution is an opportunity like none they’ve even known. The girls are mothers, daughters, sisters—women whose lives are painfully ordinary in every way but one. Sex work is the place where folks find exactly what they’re looking for, exactly what they’re missing most—on both sides

of the transaction. Here is an unflinching look at masculinity from the vantage point of those who bear the brunt of it and who in turn are experts on the subject. Here is something else too—an observation. When the blood spurts and gurgles from an exit wound at the back of a skull, one thing becomes clear. The *chicas* aren't the only ones who want something so badly they'll do anything to get it. That's an option open to everyone.

There are many remedies for impotence, not the least of which is revenge. There are many ways to challenge destiny—one's own and that of others, to change the face of the city, to alter the course of history. One is to write a scathing exposé that captures the public's imagination and doesn't let go. Another is to embark on a personal reign of terror.

IT ALL GOES POOF - PROMO 4

They usually don't make the news unless they're found strangled in the alley or mutilated in a motel room.

"¡Pásele, caballero! ¡Pásele! Aquí están las chicas. ¡Pásele!"

She smiles on cue and moans like she means it. It all goes poof when his time is up and someone knocks on the door or calls her name from the hall. The only thing real is the stain on the sheet and the cash folded up at the bottom of her purse.

A reporter tells the story of the *chicas* who work the brothels that dot *la zona central* and the *tipos* who visit them—only to find that no one wants to read it. Apathy. Antipathy. Their story cuts closer to home than anyone cares to admit. Easy to ignore, easier to condemn—the girls in the doorways personify the darkest side of life in this metropolis—their story goes to the heart of what makes the city tick.

It's always been about impotence—the kind that tells you where you belong and where you'll stay and that you can't do anything about it—the kind that seals your fate.

The sooner you figure it out the better. You can't get there from here.

This bus may head downtown, but it won't take you where you really want to go. None of them do. You have to make your own way. You have to break the rules because the rules are there to break you.

Make a plan. See the big picture. Get your head screwed on straight.

"¡Atrévate, wey! ¡No seas cobarde!"

Take it one step further than anybody else.

Las chicas siempre dicen, "You choose your sacrifices. You choose your suffering."

Will a murder spree make a difference?

WINNING THE LOTTERY - PROMO 5

This reporter knows the streets, the swank and the sleaze, the shadows and the secrets. He knows the stories that need telling, even if they never make the front page.

Case in point. There's a tradition of legal prostitution in this town. An institution of sorts. A part of the landscape. Follow the rules, and they'll even give you a business license. From a certain vantage point, working in a brothel is like winning the lottery. It puts everything in reach. It makes dreams come true.

The girls don't trust much. Who can blame them? But cooperation can be bought, and besides, he wasn't a stranger. And the guys, well, give them a forum, and they won't shut up.

A la vuelta de tu vida. Conspicuous. Taken for granted. Baked into the culture. Tells you a lot, really. All you need to know. That was the story.

It was one that no one wanted to hear.

One is random. Two? A coincidence. After that, onslaught. Head shots mostly. Close range. Like somebody was trying to prove a point. Grab your attention. Make the headlines.

"Muerto a balazos." "Local businessman found slain." "Tercera víctima identificada como empresaria." "Proprietor fatally assaulted."

Have you seen the papers? Turned on the TV?

The story that no one wanted to hear became the one they couldn't stop talking about.

The thing is, like the moans and the squeals of the *chicas*, certain things are presented strictly for your enjoyment. For entertainment purposes only. Don't take any of it too seriously. It all goes "poof" when someone knocks on the door or calls her name from the hall.

She has a muse, for what it's worth. And a story to tell of her own.

El ángel de la muerte. At your service. Not in your imagination.

She had skills and a plan too.

Anything's better than sitting around in her underwear, scrolling through Facebook.

CALL IT A TRAMPOLINE - PROMO 6

The brutality and chaos of the city touch everyone, but not equally. For many survival is all they will ever have to be proud of.

A streetwise reporter pursues a story that somehow never makes the news. Every day a small army of women goes to work in the brothels that dot the central zone, and every day a parade of men shows up to buy sex from them. Call it a tradition, an institution. It's a feature of the city that's taken for granted. Part of the

scenery that everyone's come to expect. If you play by the rules, they'll even give you a business license.

The women call it a trampoline. Suddenly, things are within reach. "How can something be bad that does good?" they ask. For their part, the men get a shot of manhood come payday and in between. Welcome relief for as long as it lasts. Several blocks at least.

Around here, prostitution is woven into everyday life, a part of the economy, the culture even. The brothel is a lot bigger than anyone cares to admit. That's a story right there. It's a wound so gaping no bandage will suffice, a jagged laceration that forces us to behold what power really is and who has it and what it takes to get it. Part of what makes it a story is how unexceptional it is. Ordinary even. What's disturbing is that no one finds it disturbing. What speaks the loudest is that no one says anything at all.

Like the brothels, violent death is something everyone's used to and accepts. As long as it happens to the other guy, folks don't give it a second thought. Something's trending though, and it's not by chance. The headlines always say *empresario* or *propietaria* but never what ties it all together. Either way there's no arguing with a gunshot to the head.

He just wanted to tell a story. He didn't expect to become part of it.

Sometimes you have to blink a few times to see what's right in front of you.

Sometimes you have to accept that you've been lied to and that it only went on for so long because you wanted it that way.

Give her credit where credit is due. This kid has a damned good imagination and knows how to use it.

Inspiration—now that's a weapon that anybody can get her hands on.

You can never be too good at marksmanship.

DISCUSSION

Where she comes from, only one thing counts. Looks. Sex appeal. That's all she gets credit for. That's all she has to work with. That's all she has to trade for whatever she wants in life. She's not alone. *Solicitando chicas* says the sign.

There's one on this block and the next and the next. This thing is predatory—on an industrial scale. Maybe it's bigger than that.

The intersection between misogyny and opportunity is where every woman finds herself every moment of every day. The task at hand is always the same—carve out a space in which to survive. Make it work, somehow. Make it work today.

"When you try to talk about it, they shut you down. They pretend it doesn't exist." She shrugs her shoulders.

Power thrives when it controls the conversation. Power thrives when it has the last word.

Don't let it have the last word.

This project employs a minimalist approach to language and storytelling.

The tone is frank. Transitions, abrupt. The pace, accelerated. The result feels immediate, authentic, urgent, raw, and very much out in the open.

Trato de Novios is a work of fiction that never veers far from the facts. The plot is tenuous by design. Imagine a camera-free *cinéma vérité* rendered with prose. Closure is elusive or nonexistent. Nobody transcends anything around here. She was a hero just for showing up.

Call it a confession for a crime in progress.

Where desperation meets desire and neon paints the night, you don't bite the hand that feeds you—you shoot it in the head.

Brazen acts of violence—narrated by the perpetrator—accompany a deep and candid look at the world of sex-work and those who depend on it—a look at those on both sides of the transaction.

It never fails.

Cada quien se enamora con la mentira que más le gusta.

You don't really fall in love with a person. You fall in love with an idea. You don't really fall in love with an idea. You fall in love with how that idea makes you feel.

There's only one question that has to be asked. What does it take to monetize human nature? What does it take to get a piece of the action?

Like the girls say, "Some of those orgasms are real."

What do you want to believe is true?

By the end of the evening, one thing is clear. She's there for her reasons. You're there for yours. She didn't write it just to show that she could. She wrote it to get even.

BEAT SHEET

Coming soon.

SCENE OUTLINE

Coming soon.

POSTER

Coming soon.

BUMPER / TEASER / TRAILER (VIDEO)

Trailer 1.

TAGLINES

It wasn't the murders that mattered. It was the love story.

No eran los asesinatos lo que importaba. Fue la historia de amor.

There's only one thing money can't buy. Sincerity.

Sólo hay una cosa que el dinero no puede comprar: Sinceridad.

How far will you go to get what you really want?

¿Hasta dónde llegarás para conseguir lo que realmente quieres?

Nothing says love like pulling a trigger.

Nada expresa amor como apretar un gatillo.

Some things are better than sex. Killing is one of them.

Hay cosas mejores que el sexo. Matar es una de ellas.

IMAGE GALLERY



TRATO DE NOVIOS - AN AUTOPSY OF DESIRE

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