

## Breaking Out With “COLD SWEAT”

Written by Michael Gingold  
Friday, 20 January 2012 16:58

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Hyperbolic film reviewers sometimes like to describe movies as “explosive,” but *COLD SWEAT* is one to which that description applies. And that’s not just because the Argentinean film (out this week on DVD from Dark Sky Films and MPI) has proven to be a breakout success for its director/co-writer, Adrián García Bogliano, who talked about its creation with *Fango*.

*COLD SWEAT* focuses on Román (Facundo Espinosa), a guy who has tracked his missing ex-girlfriend to a nondescript house in an urban neighborhood. What he finds when he goes inside, however, is a pair of old men—survivors of the brutal political regime that terrorized Argentina during the ’70s—who have lured a succession of unwitting young women inside, and have been performing sadistic experiments involving explosives on them. The villains’ unique characterizations lend the film a political undertone that’s unique among fright fare—and, as Bogliano tells us, in his country’s film output as well.



**FANGORIA:** Is there a tradition in Argentinean popular cinema in general to engage political

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themes the way your movie did?

**ADRIÁN GARCÍA BOGLIANO:** No, no, it's quite the opposite. There were a lot of films made about the dictatorship during the '80s after democracy came back, but they were all either dramas or documentaries. So it was kind of a taboo to put this subject in a horror film. Actually, before we started COLD SWEAT, there was an Argentinean film that won the Oscar, THE SECRET IN THEIR EYES, that was actually kind of a thriller with a few points about the dictatorship. That was a very new idea, and that's what I liked most about the film; they did this thing that I really wanted to do too, trying to put this subject into more commercial movies. Because there is a whole generation of people, mostly my age and younger, who don't want to know anything about what happened in Argentina in the '70s.

All those [previous] films were very dramatic and terrible and tragic, with sad endings that of course happened in real life, but I think people also need to see it presented in a different way in fiction. To me, that's very important; I always want to have strong elements relating to the society and history of Argentina. Most of the classic horror films I love have these kinds of themes.

**FANG:** You also have very interesting villains; they're not your typical horror-film bad guys. Were you trying specifically to come up with a different kind of villain, and how easy or difficult was it to cast those two roles?

**BOGLIANO:** Yeah, we wanted to have a lot of fun with the audience, presenting the opposite of what you expect in a horror movie. The villains, instead of being big guys, are these two old men, and they don't have the knives or axes or whatever weapons the killers in horror films typically use. When these guys have the girl tied up in the movie's first big horror scene, we wanted to go in a different direction than you would expect. You would expect them to threaten the girl with something more visual, and that was part of the joke.

And it was also interesting to me to create a leading character who you can believe is not going to beat the shit out of these two old men 10 minutes after he sees what they're doing. I wanted to have a guy who is not the typical hero; his first option isn't to confront these two men. At the same time, it's very funny, because a lot of people ask me afterward, "Why didn't he just beat them up?" To me, that's one of those conventions we see in movies, to believe that everyone has to be a hero and just kick the shit out of the villain and save the girl. I believe that most people would try to get the girls out and go call the police instead of confronting these two

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crazy guys with explosives in their hands. But the obvious or logical thing and what really works in a movie are two different things.

**FANG:** How did you find the actors to play the old men?



**BOGLIANO:** We thought a lot about who to cast in those parts. At the beginning, our co-producers wanted to cast professional, well-known actors from Buenos Aires, and we were shooting in La Plata, where I've lived all my life. I made several films there with a lot of actors who were not big stars or anything, but were really good, and I wanted to have actors from my city in these two roles. We were kind of fighting for that, and three weeks before shooting we didn't have those parts yet, and there was not enough money to bring more people to my city, where we were going to shoot. So I convinced the producers to hire these two old guys. I knew Omar Musa, who plays the one who uses the walker; I'd worked with him before, and he's an amazing actor. He's really good at working with his body, and that's exactly what I needed for this role. At the beginning, I wasn't quite sure, because he's much younger than he looks, and is actually in very good physical condition, but he found a way of walking and moving to make it believable. And the other guy, Omar Gioiosa, was amazing too; I knew right away that he was the guy, with his white beard—like an evil Santa Claus!

**FANG:** You shot the whole movie in an actual building; did you have any trouble staging any of the action?

**BOGLIANO:** Yeah, a lot of problems, because the spaces we had were all really, really small. And though there weren't actually two units, my brother had another camera rolling on the other side of the building, so it was really difficult, having two cameras rolling at the same time, trying to create different spaces in this house. The scene that was most difficult was the one where

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Román finds out what’s going on, that first horror sequence. It’s like 15 minutes, and that was shot in a room that was probably like 10 by 10 feet, or something like that. It was a pain in the ass, because we didn’t have enough time, and had to do a lot of thinking of how to explore that space without always showing the same things. We started to think, “OK, for this initial part of the scene, we’ll only show this part of the room, and then we’ll show this other part.” Because it could’ve been really boring to show the same space for all that time.

**FANG:** What about the scenes of destruction; did you have any trouble being able to destroy part of the house?

**BOGLIANO:** No, the only moment where we actually destroyed something was when the neighbors are smashing the wall, but that particular shot was done at a different place; that was actually a wall in the middle of nowhere. But you know, I think it works. The big scene at the end, with the slow motion and everything, was pretty dangerous, I have to say [ *lau ghs* ]. It was the only way we could do it; we couldn’t build that part of the house on a set. Actually, I wanted to run the whole climax of the film twice as long as it does now; I wanted it to be like this abstract work of art. But we didn’t have time; we had to shoot all that in one day.

With the Phantom [hi-def] camera we used, you need time to prepare every shot; you need at least half an hour between one shot and another. It takes time. If you watch the movie, it doesn’t look like a static film, but I think there are probably 10 or 15 camera movements in the whole thing. We didn’t have cranes, nothing. Steadicam? Forget about it. So the only thing I asked from the beginning was to have the Phantom, and they gave it to us for just one day. And we realized you need a certain amount of lighting—a hell of a lot of lighting, actually—to illuminate a shot with the Phantom; because of the speed, it needs much more light. So our DP had to put every single lamp we had all together for every shot. We had just enough light to be able to shoot with the Phantom.

**FANG:** How was the movie received in Argentina?

**BOGLIANO:** Pretty well, considering that there was a gap of probably 50 years since the last mainstream horror film was widely released in Argentina. Between the ’40s and the ’60s, there were a lot of Argentinean horror films, but then they stopped producing these kinds of films. Although I and other independent filmmakers have been making movies since then, there was not a tradition of having these kinds of films in mainstream theaters. So it was kind of weird for

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people to come back after 50 years and see an Argentinean horror film again. Besides, it's not a very conventional genre film, it's a very crazy movie. But we had a very good performance at the box office; it was number eight in the top 10 highest-grossing Argentinean films of last year.

A lot of people loved it, and some others really hated it; they didn't get any of the jokes, they thought they were going to see a very serious horror film, and when they found out these two old men were the villains, it was difficult for them to understand. But it was nice, because COLD SWEAT opened a door for other independent filmmakers to start making mainstream movies of different genres. In the last month, there have been several horror/fantastic/science fiction releases in theaters, which is something completely new for Argentina, so that's a very positive thing.