

## “COLD SWEAT” (Film Review)

Written by Samuel Zimmerman  
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Just the realization of what exactly the “cold sweat” this film’s title refers to, and the consequences it promises, provide plenty of goodwill for Argentinean director Adrian Garcia Bogliano’s horror film. Thankfully, the rest of it is fun, clever and often kick-ass to boot.

Premiering at SXSW as part of the Fantastic Fest-programmed SXFantastic section, COLD SWEAT follows a young man (Facundo Espinosa) as he attempts to track down his now ex-girlfriend (Camila Velasco), who has disappeared without a word. After a string of e-mails, and with his good friend Ali (Marina Glezer) striking up an on-line affair with the possible home-wrecker, the two are led to an ominous building, where they encounter a whole lot more than they were hoping to find inside.



COLD SWEAT is a kitchen-sink affair with torture by lethal chemicals, political rhetoric and even sickly, pale cannibal women in the basement. It’s tempting not to even reveal one of its earliest surprises, but since it’s an integral piece of what makes the film successful, spoiler warnings will have to suffice.

What the duo discover, of course, is that the “blonde guy” Velasco was carrying on with was a ruse to lure young women to an apartment owned by two elderly gents. The last members of a right-wing Argentinian terrorist group that disbanded in the 1970s, these geriatrics have since carried on capturing and experimenting on young girls with various acids, chemicals, concoctions and nitroglycerin. The film wastes no time in cluing the audience in to these happenings, focusing the tale on the two friends’ frantic attempts to escape and find the missing ex.

The two evil and ailing old men are wonderfully brought to life. There’s a real sense of righteousness and anger that all their past attempts at political change were in vain, and are lost on the uneducated youth of today. They’re intimidating and diabolical, yet frail and forgetful as well, with a nice dose of old-married-couple rapport. Bogliano knows that an audience’s first response to the elderly as villains would be “Take ’em out!” so he employs Glezer as a strong

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and spunky lead whose main concern is finding an exit, but who doesn't hold back when called to action. However, COLD SWEAT's villains and their intelligence are cleverly made into a palpable threat. They may not be able to run full force and catch you, but you're not running anywhere when the slightest move can result in being soaked in some awful chemical.

Bogliano brings a confident style to the film, employing a lively, drum-driven score and effectively centering a tense chunk of the picture on moving Velasco, slathered from head to toe in nitroglycerin, around the building. COLD SWEAT is a bit all over the place, and its filmmaker has a lot to work with and cut between, so there are some missteps, like the relatively shallow characterizations and the use of some cheesy heavy metal in one or two gore moments that undercut their effect—but in a film this overall enjoyable, such minor faults are easily overlooked. Especially since the makeup FX are pulled off beautifully in terms of both splatter and the aforementioned basement women, who are slightly reminiscent of the creature in MARTYRS—not as extreme, of course, but creepy and repulsive nonetheless. There seems to be a bit of subtext too (!). Even if you're not terribly aware of Argentina's contemporary history, it would be silly to overlook the specificity of its villains' age and allegiances as a focal point.

COLD SWEAT may not be particularly frightening, but if you're up for a solid, brisk, fun and tense midnight movie, it's an excellent choice. You can find out more about COLD SWEAT at SXSW [here](#) .



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