



SYNOPSIS

In the mid-seventies, a strange man arrives in a quiet provincial city. In a restaurant, without any apparent reason, he starts insulting Claudio, a renowned lawyer. The community supports the lawyer and the stranger is humiliated and thrown out of the place. Later that night the stranger, who is determined to wreak a terrible vengeance, intercepts Claudio and his wife Susana. The lawyer then takes a path of no return involving death, secrets and silences.

MORE ABOUT THE FILM...

Maria Delgado bfi.org.uk

There is a sense of menace underpinning Argentine director Benjamín Naishtat's brilliant third feature. Like 2014's *History of Fear* (in which a wealthy community in the Buenos Aires suburbs is threatened by unexplained and unrelated incidents) and 2015's *The Movement* (a black-and-white contemplation of 19th-century nation-building in the Pampas), this is a disarming allegory about middle-class society turning a blind eye to the excesses committed in the name of so-called peace and stability.

The film's narrative, set in provincial Argentina in the mid-1970s, just before the military coup, concerns small-town lawyer Claudio (Darío Grandinetti, of Pedro Almodóvar's *Talk to Her* and *Julieta*), an ostensibly decent, law-abiding citizen, whose cool exterior is rattled by an investigation into the disappearance of a stranger seen in the area three months earlier. Flamboyant private investigator Sinclair (Pablo Larraín regular Alfredo Castro) rolls into town – in one of the film's many nods to the western – to find out what has happened and in the process lifts the veneer of respectability under which Claudio, like many of the town's great and good, operates. For the stranger, Diego, was the brother-in-law of Claudio's friend Vives.

In many ways, this is also a film about acting. Paula's dance teacher talks about intentions in performance, and the town is intent on performing cordial respectability, whatever might be simmering beneath the cracks. Grandinetti's evasive Claudio is a study in minimalist acting, contrasting with Castro's mannered, effusive performance as Sinclair – a role that Naishtat wrote for him, inspired in part by Columbo.

There is a strong 1970s look to *Rojo*: not only the saturated colours, fierce zooms, freeze frames, split diopters and telephoto lenses, but also Claudio's prominent moustache, Sinclair's oversized glasses and the hit songs that offer a chorus-like commentary on the action. There is even a sly reference to Bernard Herrmann's *Taxi Driver* score in Vincent van Warmerdam's dynamic composition.

CAST

CHARACTER	ACTOR
Claudio	Darío Grandinetti
Susana	Andrea Frigerio
Detective Sinclair	Alfredo Castro
Diego Cremonesi	Dieguito / El hippie

CREW

Director/Writer	Benjamín Naishtat
Cinematography	Pedro Sotero
Film Editing	Andrés Quaranta

BOOKING

Distributor: New Wave

Non-theatrical bookings:
Troy Film Agency
troyfilmagency@btinternet
BFI_bookings.films@bfi.org.uk

Available: Now

