

# War Takes *(Tomas de Guerra)*



*A film by Adelaida Trujillo and Patricia Castaño*



A WOMEN MAKE MOVIES RELEASE

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## WAR TAKES

# Synopsis

Bogotá, Colombia, is infamous for drug barons, kidnapping, murders and the longest ongoing guerilla war in the world. But what about the majority of citizens who are trying to maintain normal lives in this troubled country? WAR TAKES goes beyond the headlines to give us an inside look at the political situation in Colombia through personal stories of three main characters.

Adelaida and Patricia, directors of a 15-year old independent production company, turned the cameras on themselves for four years to expose the tough reality in their violent, war-ravaged homeland. From conversations in the jungle with guerillas to elegant dinner parties with society's elite, WAR TAKES allows the real lives of its heroes, forever changed by war, to break through the stereotypes, forcing us to rethink our own conceptions, or misconceptions, of the beliefs and values by which these Colombians live.



# Festivals and Awards

Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival (IDFA)

Human Rights Watch Film Festival, New York

Barcelona Human Rights International Film Festival

Doc Aviv International Documentary Film Festival

Hamptons International Film Festival

The Museum of Modern Art – Documentary Fortnight

Dok Fest (Munich Documentary Film Festival)

Cine Las Americas International Film Festival



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# WAR TAKES

## Credits

78 minutes, Color, Video, Documentary

Directors

**Adelaida Trujillo and Patricia Castaño**

Producer

**Sylvia Stevens**

Editor

**Mónica Henríquez**

Assistant Director

**Colbert García**

Camera

**Adelaida Trujillo**

**Patricia Castaño**

**Colbert García**

Sound

**Gustavo De La Hoz**

Music

**Ian Hill**

Graphics

**Juan Alberto Agaton**

Production Company

**Faction Films**

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### Publicity Contact:

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High-resolution photos are available to download at  
[www.wmm.com](http://www.wmm.com)



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## **Biographies**

**PATRICIA CASTANO** studied social work and rural communication in the 70s, in Colombia, England and Holland. After an intense experience in communication, socio-economic studies and development in the country and Latin America, she committed completely to the field of the cinema and documentary television in the middle of 80s.

Thanks to an honorary scholarship of the British Council and her work in Colombia with the BBC and public and educative television, she studied cinema and television with the BBC and the Open University in England.

She founded Citurna Productions with Doris Eder de Zambrano and Adelaida Trujillo. They have co-directed several documentary productions, among them:

- La ley del Monte (Law of the Jungle),
- Seguimos adelante (Nothing Will Stop Us)
- Las otras guerras de la cocaína (Behind the Cocaine Wars)
- El mundo rotundo de Fernando Botero (The Rotund World of Fernando Botero)

All of these productions have been awarded with important international prizes.

In addition to the documentary direction, Patricia has been committed to the environmental and educational topics in TV production, and also in the edutainment scheme addressed to children.

She developed and produced the idea of Franja Metro, a successful daily programme for children which, during two years, Citurna, in Consortium with Cigala, produced for the Regional Channel in Bogotá.

From year 2000, she has been a member of the Board of directors of INPUT and also of the group of Latin American producers that promote Prix Jeunesse and the World Summit on Media for Children of the 2004 in Rio de Janeiro.

The production of Tune In To Kids – 2001, broadcasted by the regional channel in Bogotá, in which Patricia worked as Executive Producer was awarded by Unicef and the International Council of NATAS with a special Emmy prize.

In her short whiles of leisure, she combines his activities of Citurna and Imaginario with the Asociación de amigos de la Bibliored (Association of Friends of the Bibliored of the Capital District.)

**ADELAIDA TRUJILLO** studied anthropology in Colombia, and film and television direction and production in the UK, at the London International Film School and the BBC, also with a British Council scholarship. She worked for a year in the BBC's Music and Arts Department, as an associate producer and researcher for the series Made in Latin America, directed by award winning Mike Dibb.

Co-founder of Citurna, she has been involved in all the projects produced, either on the direction or production side. Adelaida is Vice President of the New Latin American Cinema Corporation based in Bogotá, member of the planning group for the Rockefeller Foundation's Communication for Social Change Network.

She is now currently developing a film on kidnap for Channel Four (UK) and other cutting edge documentary features with Patricia. She keeps sane by combining "hard docs" with producing children's programmes and raising her two kids, Pablo and Violeta, 7 and 5.



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## **Director's Statement**

Filmmakers are expected to be behind the camera trying to be objective and to describe what they see and understand from reality. That is what we have done for the last sixteen years producing a wide range of quality, meaningful television programs in and about Colombia, for local and international audiences.

In the last years, however, as the Colombian social, political and economic situation became very critical, we felt the need to point the camera at us and ask ourselves many questions about how we are facing the conflict in our country; how do we explain its evolution into the present situation; have we changed or is reality today very different from when we started recording the Colombian situation over a decade ago?

In 1987, we set out to the remote coca-planted areas in the Caguán River and La Macarena, far away in the Colombian Amazon basin. At the time very few people knew much about the area, the people, the number of peasants involved, or its relation with the FARC Marxist guerrilla.

We made there our first 16mm documentary, Law of the Jungle (ZDF/CH4/ RTVE, 1989) which has become a landmark on the subject, more so during the last government (1998-2002), when the Caguán became a household name in Colombia, as the "distension area" (the size of Switzerland) ceded to the FARC as the first step in a peace process which started in January 1999 and did not move anywhere. On the contrary, the war spread through the rest of the country and became a harsh reality, not as a civil war would, for the civilian society at large is not siding with guerrillas or paramilitaries, but as their main unarmed...target: we are the victims of massacres, kidnaps, bombings.

To make things worse, the Americans are here! In August of 2001, President Clinton visited Colombia to start the Plan Colombia; this is basically military aid, to support the war against drugs (and against the guerrillas, evidently, for drugs money is one of the main sources of income for them -the other being kidnapping).

We are then facing a number of dilemmas (between the devil and the deep blue sea):

We come from a liberal-minded, educated upper class with all the privileges, risks and contradictions (good and bad) this entails in a Latin American country like Colombia.

We would like a better society and have always been committed through our work to reaching that aim. But how further away are we from achieving a better society now?

We have become disenchanted with the Colombian guerrilla movement because of the way they have devised to reach power (drug money, kidnaps, extortion) and because nothing seems as far from a "democratic" society than their means of dealing with problems: authoritarian, Stalinist, vertical and with no respect for any humanitarian principles --euphemisms instead of truths.

We do not want a powerful US supported Army, fighting a "war against drugs" or a "war against terrorism" with no chance of being successful either against the drug trade or the guerrillas. This will strengthen the guerrillas' peasant support and encourage "nationalistic" undertones, which might blur the real implications of the guerrilla power.

War Takes tries to picture this complex situation in a country stigmatized by the international media. It also shows another point of view of the upper classes in our continent; it challenges the stereotypes and shows the real day-to-day life of the urban dwellers of a country's democracy, full of creative people and initiatives that are internationally known. But never make the mainstream media abroad.

We also hope War Takes shows not only the harsh reality, but also mainly the hope we all live with in trying to make our country a better place for all.

-Directors Adelaida Trujillo and Patricia Castaño



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# The New York Times

Friday, June 13, 2003

CRITIC'S CHOICE/Film

## Movies That Begin Where the Wars Won't End

By STEPHEN HOLDEN

A hero can be someone who desperately tries to save the day but fails. Such a man is Lt. Gen. Romeo Dallaire, who served as the commander of the United Nations forces in Rwanda in 1994.

The general, a Canadian who sounded the alarm about the possibility of mass killings, is the subject of Steven Silver's documentary portrait, "The Last Just Man," which is having its New York premiere tomorrow at the Walter Reade Theater as part of the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival.

As all signs pointed toward an organized, large-scale massacre in Rwanda, General Dallaire frantically alerted United Nations officials in New York to the imminent catastrophe and five times requested reinforcements for his tiny contingent of peace-keeping troops. Each time, the answer that came back was an emphatic no.

Especially adamant about not intervening in Rwanda was the United States, which was reluctant to sustain any more casualties after the loss of American lives in Somalia and did not view the country as a threat to national security. Three months later, Rwanda turned into a killing field where more than half a million people were butchered by machete and machine gun fire in just 100 days. The movie insists that the slaughter could have been prevented.

"The Last Just Man" is the kind of unflinching documentary you can see only at the Human Rights Watch festival, which runs at the Walter Reade Theater through June 26.

In the film, the general recounts the events leading up to the massacre and describes how he ultimately decided to break the rules and become personally involved. That involvement nearly cost him his life.

Two other festival documentaries look deep beneath the surface

of the societies they examine. The first is Hany Abu-Assad's "Ford Transit," a portrait of a Palestinian cabdriver and his passengers, filmed in his taxi as he makes his daily rounds between East Jerusalem and Ramallah.

Frequent roadblocks and inspections along the way have turned the route into a frustrating obstacle course, which he has found ingenious ways to circumvent. Reflecting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, most of his passengers lament the Palestinian suicide bombings and show a sophisticated understanding of the region's history and politics.

In taking you to the heart of a trouble spot, "Ford Transit," like "The Last Just Man," reminds you that there are no simple solutions. It also points out the degree to which ordinary people who abhor violence find themselves caught in the crossfire of fiercely militant forces beyond their control.

Patricia Castano and Adelaida Trujillo's anguished personal docu-

mentary, "War Takes," a meditation on Colombian society that took four years to complete, is similarly steeped in the culture and history of the country it studies. The volatile mix of left-wing revolutionary guerrillas, right-wing militarism and the drug trade in Colombia has resulted in a society that barely holds together and whose democratic government is too weak to bring about peace. This sad, scary portrait of a country in crisis suggests that much worse lies ahead.

These three films are a rich sample from a festival that, at its strongest, fulfills its mission of bringing the cinematic conscience of the world.

The Human Rights Watch International Film Festival runs through June 26 at the Walter Reade Theater, 165 West 65th Street, Lincoln Center, (212) 875-5600; [www.filmlinc.com](http://www.filmlinc.com). Admission: \$9.50; \$7 for students; \$5 for members; \$4.50 for 65+ at weekday matinees.



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## WAR TAKES

reviews

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June 2003

Highlights of the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival

HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
WATCH

## International Film Festival

From June 13 through June 26 the Film Society of Lincoln Center in New York City hosts the 14th Annual Human Rights Watch International Film Festival. This compilation of 28 shorts, features, narratives and documentaries all focused on the critical, and in most cases contemporary, examination of human rights issues around the world that will leave viewers breathless and, more importantly, aware. With selections addressing issues from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa, the festival exhibits a much-needed localized perspective on major human rights issues from every corner of the world.

### Wartakes

Wartakes is a standout work from award-winning filmmakers Adelaida Trujillo and Patricia Castano of Bogota, Colombia. Not an ordinary documentary, the film is an intimate, personal diary of the filmmakers' lives in the violent conflicts of Colombia. The work is so fascinating to watch not only because it brings awareness and clarity to the political and social issues of Colombia's long-running conflicts but it also allows outsiders a daily, inside view at real middle class living and thought within the conflict. The filmmakers must also deal with the dynamics and consequences of turning cameras on themselves and their families in such trying, heart-breaking times.



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