

PENÉLOPE
CRUZ

ÉDGAR
RAMÍREZ

GAEL GARCÍA
BERNAL

ANA DE
ARMAS

LEONARDO
SBARAGLIA

AND WAGNER
MOURA

FROM
THE AWARD WINNING
DIRECTOR OF
CARLOS



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2019
Official Selection



WASP NETWORK

A FILM BY
OLIVIER ASSAYAS



CG Cinéma, RT Features, Nostromo Pictures, Wasp Network AIE, Scope Pictures
present



WASP NETWORK

Official Selection



A film by Olivier Assayas

Starring

Penélope Cruz, Édgar Ramírez, Gael García Bernal,
Ana de Armas, Leonardo Sbaraglia et Wagner Moura

France, Brazil, Spain, Belgium – 125 Min

International press in Venice

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SYNOPSIS

Havana, early 90's. René González, a Cuban pilot, steals a plane and flees Cuba, leaving behind his beloved wife and daughter. He starts a new life in Miami. Other Cuban defectors soon follow and start a spy network. Their mission is to infiltrate violent anti-Castroist organizations responsible for terror attacks on the island.



LONG SYNOPSIS

René González (Edgar Ramírez) is a Cuban pilot who leaves his wife and young daughter behind in the communist island nation to defect to the United States and begin a new life of freedom in the early 1990s. But René is not the upstart American striver he appears to be. Joining forces with a group of Cuban exiles in South Florida known as the *Wasp Network* — led by undercover operative Manuel Viramontez a.k.a. Gerardo Hernandez (Gael García Bernal) — he becomes part of a pro-Castro spy ring tasked with observing and infiltrating Cuban-American terror groups intent upon attacking the socialist republic.

Based on the true story of The Cuban Five — intelligence officers including González who were arrested in Florida in September 1998 and later convicted of espionage and other illegal activities — *Wasp Network* is a gripping and stylish political thriller that wears many faces, bringing together a rogue's gallery of Cuban nationals and Cuban-American exiles engaged in a complex and deeply nuanced battle of competing ideologies and shifting loyalties.

Inspired by Fernando Morais' book *The Last Soldiers of the Cold War*, writer-director Olivier Assayas (*Carlos*, *Personal Shopper*) gathers an ensemble cast including Penélope Cruz, Wagner Moura, Ana de Armas, and Leonardo Sbaraglia for an explosive and urgent spy game fought in a hall of mirrors across neighboring states whose decades-long standoff casts shadows into the present day.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In 1959, Fidel Castro seizes power in Cuba toppling the US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. The island becomes a “Socialist Republic”. Washington immediately severs all ties with Havana and imposes a comprehensive embargo on the Communist country in its vicinity.

Starting in the early 1960s, exiled Cubans, most of them based in Florida, organize their “resistance” against the Castro regime and launch attacks against Cuba. In 2001, the Cuban government blames them for the death of a total of nearly 3,500 people, including the victims of the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961.

In order to combat its US-based enemies, Cuba sends waves of spies to America to infiltrate their organizations. In the early 1990s, about thirty of its agents thus set up *the Wasp Network* — *la Red Avispa*, in Spanish — to provide Havana with inside information about diverse activities ranging from the rescue at sea of Cuban refugees to much more bellicose endeavors by way of links to criminal networks.

These Cuban spies usually pretend to be dissidents escaping their country. Among them are René González, who flies a small plane to Key West, Florida, in December 1990

and Juan Pablo Roque, also a pilot, trained in the USSR. In 1992, Roque swims seven hours across the ocean to reach the US naval base in Guantanamo (then not yet a prison camp), at Cuba’s southern tip. Several of the agents abandon their family without a word of explanation to live a perilous and solitary life in Florida trying to infiltrate anti-Castro organizations.

For a number of years, under the command of Gerardo Hernandez aka Manual Viramontez, *the Wasp Network* collects sensitive information. Occasionally, its spies also collaborate with the FBI, for example in order to neutralize the US-based PUND — the Spanish acronym for Democratic Party of National Unity — which involves itself in drug trafficking. Well beyond the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the USSR, these agents thus become *The Last Soldiers of the Cold War*, the title of the book by Fernando Morais, a Brazilian writer, on which Olivier Assayas’s film is loosely based. Their war is real: in 1996, when the Castro regime harshly clamps down on the *Concilio Cubano*, an umbrella organization for many local groups working together toward democratization, the Cuban aviation shoots down two small, unarmed planes flown by exiled pilots intent on dropping leaflets on Havana. Four of them lose their lives.

In response, in the summer of 1997, Luis Posada Carriles, known as “the godfather of the Cuban exiles”, organizes a series of bomb attacks against tourist hotels in Havana. One tourist is killed, several others are injured. A year later it becomes clear that these bomb attacks were bankrolled by the *Cuban American National Foundation* (CANF) which is chaired by an exiled Cuban millionaire, Jorge Mas Canosa.

In the spring of 1998, at the behest of Fidel Castro, the novelist Gabriel García Márquez meets with President Bill Clinton at the White House to hand over all the evidence collected by the Cuban intelligence of “terrorist activities” organized by anti-Castro forces on American soil. But that attempt at rapprochement is short-lived as, in response, the CIA dismantles the *Wasp Network*. Among the Cuban agents that are arrested, five refuse to collaborate with the American justice system. Not entering a plea bargain, they receive extended prison sentences for conspiracy to commit not only espionage but also murder — on account of their unsubstantiated implication in the shooting down of the two small planes in 1996. The convicted men become known as the “Cuban Five”, heroes in their home country.

Sentenced to fifteen years in prison, René González is released in 2011, two years early. In 2014, his comrades are part of a prisoners exchange benefitting from the “thaw” in US-Cuban relations which culminates, in 2016, with President Barack Obama’s historic visit to Havana. A year later, the election of Donald Trump heralds a return to confrontation.



About the FBI

For the story told in *Wasp Network*, the role of the FBI is crucial yet shrouded with ambiguity for anyone unfamiliar with American domestic politics.

Indeed, Florida is one of the so-called “swing states” that tip the balance in presidential elections between the staunchly “red” and “blue” states, that is the strongholds of, respectively, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. In Florida, as in 47 other of the 50 states comprising the Union, “the winner takes all”. Moreover, Florida is the swing state that sends the biggest number of delegates – 29 – to the Electoral College, which actually chooses the winner. Therefore, Florida is the keystone of any presidential election.

Hence the importance of the Cuban American vote, namely in several densely populated constituencies in Miami where many Cuban exiles live. They tend to vote for the party adopting the toughest stance toward the homeland they have fled. No political party or administration, Republican or Democrat, can afford to ignore this electorate – only a sliver but a decisive one. This was also the case for the Clinton administration, regardless of its broader progressive agenda.

As the federal police force, the FBI keeps tabs on anti-Castro organizations which may engage in all sorts of illegal activities – assassinations, drug or human trafficking, acts of piracy, attacks on Cuba... – with potentially negative fallout for the United States and its diplomacy. But, at the same time, the FBI has no interest in antagonizing a key electorate. To the extent possible, it turns a blind eye to anti-Castro machinations on American soil and discreetly releases the exiled enemies of the Communist regime it apprehends.

To fulfill its ambivalent mission, the FBI needs informants inside the Cuban diaspora. Juan Pablo Roque, the double agent in the film, is a case in point. One also understands why the FBI shadows René González for a number of years, and wiretaps his communications, without arresting him. As long as he and other Cuban agents do nothing else than to spy on anti-Castro organizations, they are a precious source of information. However, the FBI runs the risk of being used by the Cuban agents it tries to use: when *the Wasp Network* informs it of a plot to assassinate Fidel Castro, the FBI is compelled to intervene, lest it would become an accessory to the crime.

This is not the only price the FBI has to pay for its amalgamation of US domestic politics, counter-espionage and the destabilization of a foreign country. When Juan Pablo Roque goes public about his work for the FBI, and blows the cover of his handler, the agency’s unsavory interactions with Cuban agents are exposed and jeopardized. But the steepest price is paid by the *Wasp Network*: the ring of spies is taken down, and its agents are sentenced to long years in prison, when Fidel Castro chooses to prove to Bill Clinton the extent of anti-Cuban operations that are launched from America, the safe haven of his exiled foes. This prompts them into action against what it can no longer feign to ignore. Per contra, the Federal Police still does not investigate anti-Cuban terrorist plots, and continues to spare its perpetrators and bankrollers in the US...



A CONVERSATION WITH WRITER-DIRECTOR OLIVIER ASSAYAS

What was your entry point into the Cuban Five story?

Rodrigo Teixeira, the Brazilian producer of the film, had the rights to the book, and because I had made *Carlos*, he contacted my producer, Charles Gillibert, in France, and asked him to pass me the book *The Last Soldiers of the Cold War: The Story of the Cuban Five* by Fernando Morais, who is also a politician in Brazil. I read the book, which is mostly factual, with not a lot of narrative because it tries to deal with the many layers of an extremely complex story, spanning many years. It took me a while to get into it but I was fascinated by the story at its core of the Cuban Five, and the underground war between Cuban exiles and the Castro regime. Also the book provided a lot of first-hand raw material that shed a new light on the happenings. But there was a bigger framework there, a modern story that had not been explored on film, connecting the intimate and the universal, that of individuals caught up in the workings of politics and history — something I had already explored in *Carlos*, and felt I could take one step further.



There's a strand in your work emphasizing espionage and subterfuge. Where does this interest come from?

I have always been interested in the complexities of modern politics. If we discuss fake news and disinformation in this day and age, it's stuff that has always been around in one way or another — it used to be called propaganda. A lot of things we don't connect with politics, and political strategy, are actually a central part of politics, and right now we are now becoming much more aware of those issues. Terrorism, spying, and the way they are spun can only be understood through this lens. The story of the Cuban Five, as told in *Wasp Network*, with its ambiguities and conflicts, connect to that strain in my work, reflecting my interest in exploring the underworld of modern information and disinformation.

How does your structure for the movie differ from the book's structure?

I've mostly used fragments of the book, mainly its first-hand research, interviews with key protagonists, and transcripts leaked by Cuban State Security. I referred to it a lot, but I also used other sources to crosscheck the facts. It was extremely challenging to sum up in one film the inner politics of antagonist anti-Castroist groups, the ambiguities, contradictions and flip-flopping of U.S. immigration laws, the complexities of the ground work of the various members of the *Wasp Network*. Obviously I had to simplify some of the events and adjust the chronology for narrative reasons. But I kept, and vastly emphasized, the basics of the first couple of chapters, before we come to understand who René González actually is.

What made René Gonzales fascinating to you as a character?

He's more of a soldier than a spy, someone who is assigned a mission and who sacrifices his personal life for his beliefs in a political or even religious way. I thought there was something very moving about his fate. He fought the war in Angola, had a family, and at some point decided, or was ordered by his superiors, to do a job that would separate him from his family. He was extremely genuine and honest in his involvement in the cause — he didn't do it for the money, and he lived a very difficult life undercover in the U.S. All the while he was struggling to bring his family over from Cuba. I was also interested in his relationship to his wife Olga and his young daughter Irma — that's what drives the movie in many ways. I had the sense that I was making a movie that was not only about a spy, but also about someone doing a tough job abroad, separated from his loved ones, and who tries to reunite with them. It's emotions we all can relate to.

Olga González, played by Penélope Cruz, is another fascinating character in that she's a strong woman in a story that is predominantly set in the world of men.

To me the emotional core of the film is the character of Olga, because she's brought into a story that is not her story — it's her husband's — and it completely shakes up her world and transforms her destiny. She ends up accepting the choices of her husband. Initially she's a victim who suffers from decisions that were not hers. But then she takes over and she's the one making those decisions, and she has to make some pretty tough choices. She decides to fight for her husband, and accept his fate in order to save her family. At the end of the film, we come to admire her.

Why was Penélope Cruz the right choice for the role?

For Olga I wanted an actress with a profound capacity for empathy, and she certainly brought that to the role. Penelope has a powerful and commanding screen presence, and also an uncanny capacity for connecting emotionally with the audience. It was a great satisfaction to be able to work with her on this part. She is unique, and the complexities, the conflicts, and the strengths of Olga made her vital for this film. We are all in many ways indebted to Penélope as this film owes a lot to her involvement and her trust in a tough project. It is an ambitious and challenging part, shot in Cuba in conditions of minimal comfort.

You worked with Edgar Ramírez in *Carlos*, why was he the right actor to play René González?

Part of the reason I was interested in this project in the first place was the opportunity to work with Edgar again. Ever since we made *Carlos*, which is already ten years ago, we've remained friends and stayed in touch. I love him and admire his work. Each time we met we would discuss potential projects, but nothing appropriate turned up, or the timing was off. But I knew René Gonzales was a great role for Edgar, and reuniting with him on camera was always part of the plan. He brings to René a lot of what he brought to *Carlos* — his generosity, his passion, his intensity. But, as we often said on set, René is the anti-Carlos, and I think Edgar brought nuance to René's emotions — his vulnerability and his humanity as a loving husband and father, which his something Carlos didn't allow for.

You're working with Gael García Bernal for the first time. What convinced you that he could play Manuel Viramontez, leader of the Wasp Network?

I've known and admired Gael for a long time. And this was the first opportunity to offer him a suitable part. I met Gerardo Hernandez aka Manuel Viramontez in Cuba when preparing the film. Ever since that meeting I was convinced Gael was the best choice to embody him. He has the subtlety, the smarts, and the lightness of touch



that make a believable spy. And he also understood the wicked sense of humor of the character, which was of his own invention. It was a pleasure being on set with Gael, I loved the complicity we had, and was always surprised by the nuances he brought to his character. I hope it will happen again soon!

Were you familiar with Wagner Moura from his work in *Narcos* playing Pablo Escobar?

I had not seen *Narcos*, and I didn't want to see it because Juan Pablo Roque is such a different character. Even physically, it's two completely different individuals and one has to admire Wagner for morphing from one to the other. Meeting Wagner was one of the great satisfactions I got out of making this film. I had not seen his work but from the moment I met him in Los Angeles, but I felt we spoke the same language, shared the same values, and approached cinema with a similar passion. He completely reinvented the character of Roque and made him a complex, conflicted individual, torn between darkness and light.



Globetrotting is another strain coursing through your work. What interested you in Cuba and its politics and what was it like to film there?

When we started thinking about making this movie, I asked to go to Cuba and look around, to see the place, listen to the people and learn about the country because I had never been there. I only knew what someone who reads the newspaper knows, but I had no solid knowledge of its culture or history. Cuba is visually stunning, especially in terms of its rundown Caribbean architecture. Even if it also reflects the dreadful misery the Cuban people live in. All filming is run by the State, and very few movies get made there. Nonetheless we started discussing with Cuban partners the option of shooting in Havana. But soon we realized it was going to be extremely difficult and finally the Cubans turned us down. So we started looking around in Central and South America, where we might be able to recreate a believable Cuba. But there was no satisfying alternative. And it made us reconsider the actual possibility to make such a film at all. Luckily we had stayed in touch with the Cuban producers and after a few months, when they realized we were serious about making the film, they decided that as long as it was going to happen, it might as well happen in Cuba. So the issue went all the way to the top of the State, and they ended up green-lighting us.

The Cubans wound up being absurdly generous with us. Even if once in a while we sensed there was no consensus for that within their political hierarchy. It's an authoritarian state, so it's either a hard no and all the doors are closed, or it's yes and miraculously every possible door is open.

Where were you allowed to film in Cuba?

They allowed us to shoot on military bases, inside planes, in some of the actual lobbies where hotel bombings took place — it was an amazing experience to have access to locations where no film crew had been before. We did it all with the help of the military, the police, and the State. We were allowed to shoot the exterior of Villa Marista, the headquarters of the Cuban State Security, a place not even Cuban film crews are allowed to film.

Making a movie in this context — a fairly complex production that includes a lot of planes and boats and weapons and action scenes — was challenging, and reminded me of shooting *Carlos* in Lebanon, where a movie of that scale had also never been made. You have a lot of hurdles, and it's very tough because everything is new to those people. Every day was a war to get things simply happening. But the help of the Cuban officials was precious — we could never have made this movie without their support. I'm also talking in terms of budget, or to put it in other words, in terms of production value.

This is a period piece set in the 1990s, and Fidel Castro makes an appearance in a news clip. Describe this clip, and why it's so important to the film.

It's a bit tricky because as much as I don't want to be partisan, I'm certainly not a Castroist. The country is not a democracy and a lot of basic freedoms are not respected. I am on the side of the Cuban people, and the Cubans suffer a lot under that regime. But it's also a country that has been hit very hard, and for over half a century, by the U.S.-led embargo. The population has paid a high price. When I was researching the film, I wanted to use news clips to ground the story in historical fact. Then I discovered this very striking interview of Fidel Castro explaining in simple terms exactly what the movie is about! I was a bit concerned that it would make me look pro-Castro, as in this case he happens to be totally correct. But it is historical truth so I was compelled to use it.

The Cuban exile community of Miami, on the other side of the ocean, is a cinematic and complex world in its own right. Where did you film?

We're an independent Brazilian/European co-production, which means shooting in Miami wasn't within our budget, so we shot a few very simple exteriors in Miami and the interiors were shot either in Cuba or the Canary Islands, in places where we could reconstruct what Miami looked like 30 years ago. The major problem I had was representing the Cuban-American community — the complexity of its politics is staggering. Also because Florida is a swing state and the Cuban vote holds much broader consequences in American politics. You have so many rival groups and warring factions, so many organizations, some extremely violent and involved in crime, others more realist and benign. It's like this big knot, and I had to simplify as much as I could so the audience could get the basics.

The Ana de Armas character is another fascinating character, mirroring Penélope Cruz's in a way...

I wanted to make a spy movie with the women at the center, focusing on the couples and the human relationships between the major characters. I didn't want it to be a political movie. I wanted it to be about individuals swallowed up or crushed by politics. And the real-life story of Ana Margarita Martinez is a traumatic one. I tried to make her a lively, fun character and Ana de Armas helped me a lot, she is an amazing screen presence — for me a revelation. She brought out the sadness of a woman betrayed, but also gave joy, youth, energy and naiveté to her character. We end up loving her and sharing her pain. This movie would make no sense without those two strong women who are really the axis of the narrative, and gave me the desire to make the film in the first place.





You've done light aerial shots before — Maggie Cheung traipsing across rooftops in *Irma Vep* and Juliette Binoche under *the Clouds of Sils Maria*, but nothing on this level!

You have no idea — the aerial shots were madness. We were very excited when we got to Cuba, because everything seemed possible, on a bigger scale than what we had initially imagined. While this film is made on a higher budget than my recent films, it was certainly not as expensive as it looks, and that is thanks to the Cuban locations.

We came to realize early on that there were no tourist airplanes on the entire island — we had to bring them in and we wound up sourcing Beechcrafts and Cessnas through private collectors in the U.S., because those planes aren't made anymore. The logistics were absurdly complex and we worked on it for months.

For aerial shots you need helicopters, and in Cuba you don't have helicopters. We had to rely on the army, which only has these huge Russian transport choppers the size of several trucks. So everything ended up being twice as complicated as it would have

been in a normal context, where those shots would have been difficult to get right in the first place.

Paradoxically, the MiGs were a simpler issue. When I was writing the script, I remember typing lines like «A Mig-19 takes off,» and thinking “Am I out of my mind? How will I ever get away with that?” But the last few vintage MiGs still flying are in Cuba. They are absurdly dangerous planes to fly, antiques from another era. But the military gave us access to them whether on the ground or in flight. They had the planes take off for us and do flyovers and even allowed us to give a camera to a co-pilot who did in-flight shots based on our instructions. We even had access to the control tower of the Cuban Air Force Base.

Because we were functioning on such a tight budget, I had to use as few special effects as possible. Shooting the planes — and the boats — was dramatically time consuming. Learning the process, designing the shots, redesigning them many times, and discussing the execution with pilots took up a huge amount of my time.

What is your take on what ultimately happened to the Cuban Five?

It's a sad story, those guys had a tough life, they weren't James Bond-type spies — they were proletarian spies, with no money, who got arrested and became hostages to U.S.-Cuban politics. And I think they had an unfair trial. They had nothing to do with the shooting down of the Cessnas, they only infiltrated anti-Castroist organizations who were involved in a kind of covert war against their country, whatever one thinks of the politics of that country. And those who didn't cooperate among the Cuban Five got extremely harsh prison sentences. René González spent 12 years in jail — he had become part of something bigger than himself and he and his family and colleagues got crushed.

One thinks of *Something in the Air* in terms of individual lives getting caught up in politics — is that a thematic concern of yours in your work?

I grew up in the '70s, so this issue of connecting your life to political idealism comes naturally to me — it's my language, it's my life. I've seen the world change since. I've seen how that political idealism of the '70s has more or less vanished. And I've seen the effect it had on my generation — it was incredibly destructive. You have to face that, eventually. But there was also something vital, something precious, at its core. And it is especially meaningful in a world that has become as cynical as ours. I'm constantly torn by those conflicting energies.

OLIVIER ASSAYAS BIOGRAPHY

Olivier Assayas, born in Paris on January 25th 1955 is the writer and director of some twenty features.

After studying art and literature, he made short films, wrote screenplays (notably for André Téchiné) and contributed film theory, journalism and criticism to french film magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma*.

His films have brought him international recognition, ever since his debut *Disorder* was awarded at the 1986 Venice Mostra.

He has also published various books dealing both with cinema and autobiography. The most recent « Un Voyage – Marseille-Rio 1941 » resurrecting the war writings of his father and a series of missing photos of Germaine Krull is currently the subject of an exhibition at the prestigious Rencontres Photographiques d'Arles.



Filmography

- 2019 WASP NETWORK**
- 2018 DOUBLES VIES** (NON-FICTION)
- 2016 PERSONAL SHOPPER**
Best Director - Cannes Film Festival
- 2014 CLOUDS OF SILS MARIA**
Prix Louis-Delluc
- 2012 APRÈS-MAI** (SOMETHING IN THE AIR)
Best Screenplay - Venice Film Festival
- 2010 CARLOS**
Golden Globe Winner – Best Miniseries or Motion Picture made for TV
- 2008 L'HEURE D'ÉTÉ** (SUMMER HOURS)
- 2008 ELDORADO** (Documentary)
- 2007 BOARDING GATE**
- 2005 NOISE** (Documentary)
- 2004 CLEAN**
Best Actress (Maggie Cheung) - Cannes Film Festival
- 2002 DEMONLOVER**
- 2000 LES DESTINÉES SENTIMENTALES**
- 1999 FIN AOÛT, DÉBUT SEPTEMBRE** (LATE AUGUST, EARLY SEPTEMBER)
Best Actress (Jeanne Balibar) - San Sebastián Film Festival
- 1997 HHH – Un portrait de Hou Hsiao-hsien** (Documentary)
- 1996 IRMA VEP**
- 1994 L'EAU FROIDE** (COLD WATER)
- 1993 UNE NOUVELLE VIE** (A NEW LIFE)
- 1991 PARIS S'ÉVEILLE** (PARIS AWAKENS)
Prix Jean-Vigo
- 1989 L'ENFANT DE L'HIVER** (WINTER'S CHILD)
- 1986 DÉSORDRE** (DISORDER)
Fipresci Prize - Venice Film Festival

LES PRINCIPAUX PERSONNAGES



René González (Édgar Ramírez)

Born in 1956. His left-leaning parents having fled the Batista regime, he is born in Chicago, and therefore entitled to a US passport. However, after returning with his family to Cuba at the age of five, he subsequently enrolls in the Communist youth organization and not only joins the Cuban army — though, as a dual citizen, he is not subject to the compulsory military service — but also fights in 1977 in the Angolan civil war where Havana intervenes in support of the Marxist government.

In December 1990, González steals a small crop duster and defects to the US, landing at the Boca Chica airbase in Florida. He leaves behind his wife, Olga, who is unaware of his mission as a spy, and their young daughter, Irma. Much in demand as a pilot, he succeeds in joining an organization set up by José Basulto, *the Brothers to the rescue*, and the PUND, which engages in drug trafficking. He tips off the FBI to sink the anti-Castro organization. In January 1997, his Cuban family is allowed to join him in the US. Only then Olga learns about her husband's true mission. Twenty months later, in September 1998, González is arrested and sentenced to fifteen years in prison. He only reunites with his family in 2013, when he returns to Cuba for a hero's welcome as one of the *Cuban Five*.

Olga Salanueva (Penélope Cruz)

Born in 1954. She is René González wife and only learns about his spy activities prior to her departure for Florida with their daughter Irma. She works odd jobs in Miami, first as a cleaning lady in a private clinic, then in a call-in center for Hispanics to improve their English. A second daughter, Ivett, is born in America. After her husband's arrest, Olga also refuses to cooperate with the prosecution. In 1999, she is detained for three months prior to her deportation to Cuba. For long years, she is not granted a visa to come to the US to visit her husband in prison. She only sees him again upon his return to Havana, in 2013.



Gerardo Hernandez (Gael García Bernal)

Born in 1965. He is the son of a Spanish mother having fled the Franco dictatorship in her country and, like González, also joins the Cuba's expeditionary corps in Angola. He arrives in Florida in 1991 under a false identity to assume the command of the *Wasp Network*. Officially a graphist and designer, he coordinates the network of Cuban agents on American soil and liaises with Havana until his arrest in September 1998. Refusing to cooperate, he is sentenced to life in prison. His wife, Adriana Perez O'Connor, is not allowed to visit him during the first eight years of his detention. As one of the last three of the Cuban Five, he eventually benefits from a prisoners exchange in December 2014 which is part of President Obama's overtures toward Cuba.



Juan Pablo Roque (Wagner Moura)

Born in 1956. A lieutenant-colonel of the Cuban Air Forces, he spectacularly “defects” swimming across the ocean to the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay. He becomes part of the *Wasp Network* but, unlike its other members, simultaneously works as a double agent for the FBI. Very well paid, proud of his good looks, he lives the life of Riley in Florida. His marriage with Ana Margarita Fernandez goes down in the annals of the local Cuban diaspora as the most memorable social highlight in a decade. Roque even publishes a book made up from the beginning to the end, *The Deserter* he falsely claims to be...

In 1996, the day before the two small planes are shot down by the Cuban aviation, he returns to Havana, via Tampa and Cancún. Left behind dumbfounded, his wife next sees him on a TV screen revealing his existence as a spy in the US and ranting against Cuban exiles. Roque subsequently retires into anonymity in Cuba while his wife sues Havana in US courts for compensation. She is awarded 27 million dollars but, in actuality, retrieves less than one percent of that amount.

Ana Margarita Martinez (Ana de Armas)

Newly divorced, she first meets Juan Pedro Roque at Sunday mass shortly after his arrival in Florida. It's love at first sight: strikingly handsome, the lieutenant-colonel of the Cuban Air Forces is a second father for her two children and seems the ideal partner for her. Their wedding, on 1st April 1995, is a dream come true in the eyes of the Cuban diaspora. But, only months later, the bubble bursts: Ana Margarita finds her home cleared out by her husband and, petrified, discovers him on TV revealing in an interview on CNN, after his return to Cuba, his double life as a spy in the United States. The shock is all the more brutal as the community of exiled Cubans, who had idolized her couple, now violently rejects her in utter disbelief that she could possibly have been unaware of her husband's duplicity. As a last resort of self-defense, Ana Margarita decides to sue the Cuban state for... rape, arguing that she was abused by a man serving his country who was not who he pretended to be. In the absence of any precedent in legal history, a US court validates her compensation claim and evaluates it at 27 million dollars. However, Ana Margarita has been able to retrieve less than 1 percent of that amount.



Jorge Mas Canosa (Omar Ali)

1939-1997. A dissident of the first hour, he is the founder — at the instigation of one of Ronald Reagan's advisors — of the *Cuban American National Foundation* (CANF), viscerally hostile to the Castro regime. Having made a fortune in the construction industry, he wields much clout both in Miami and Washington DC, and dreams of replacing Fidel Castro at the helm of a democratic Cuba. He bankrolls destabilization attempts such as the bomb attacks against hotels in Havana in 1997 (with the help of Luis Posada Carriles, whom he had met in the US army in the 1960s). He makes a final attempt to organize Fidel Castro's assassination shortly before his death, which is mourned in Miami like a national tragedy. However, the *Wasp Network* gets wind of the operation and, in this instance, weaponizes the FBI and the American coast guard to thwart it.



Luis Posadas Carriles (Tony Plana)

1928-2018. Known as the “godfather” — his face being disfigured by an attempt on his life perpetrated by the Cuban secret services — he incessantly mounts operations against the Castro regime. For instance, in 1976, he organizes the explosion of a DC-8 of *Cubana de Aviación* which cost the lives of 73 passengers. He is also behind the series of bomb attacks against tourist hotels in Havana in the summer of 1997. A few months later, in an interview with *The New York Times*, he acknowledges his responsibility for the operation, shared with Jorge Mas Canosa, its bankroller. Arrested in Panama in 2000 for an alleged plot in view of assassinating Fidel Castro, he is acquitted and, until his death in 2018, similarly spared by American courts, despite numerous trials. A Venezuelan passport holder, he is never extradited by the US, despite numerous requests to that end under President Hugo Chavez.

José Basulto (Leonardo Sbaraglia)

Born in 1940. Enrolled by the CIA, he participates in the botched Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961, and goes on to dedicate the rest of his life to the struggle against the Castro regime. In 1991, he creates *Brothers to the rescue*, ostensibly an association to assist Cuban refugees fleeing the island to reach Florida by sea. But soon enough, with the number of so-called *balseros* dwindling, this humanitarian mission is superseded by more militant actions such as the violation of Cuban airspace to drop leaflets on Havana. Infiltrated by René González and Juan Pedro Roque from the *Wasp Network*, Basulto’s organization loses four pilots when, in February 1996, two of its Cessna aircrafts are downed by Cuban MiG fighters. Basulto himself pilots a third Cessna which succeeds in returning to Florida. In 2005, he offers a reward of one million dollars for conclusive evidence for the — likely — involvement of Raúl Castro in the shooting down of the two small airplanes..



CAST SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

Penélope Cruz - Olga Salanueva

Academy Award-winner Penelope Cruz has proven herself to be one of the most versatile actresses of today by playing a variety of compelling characters and becoming the first actress from Spain to be nominated for and to win an Academy Award.

Cruz was first introduced to American audiences in the Spanish films "Jamon, Jamon" and "Belle Epoque," and in Stephen Frears' "Hi-Lo Country." Credits include Fernando Trueba's "The Girl of Your Dreams"; Billy Bob Thornton's "All the Pretty Horses"; Fina Torres's "Woman on Top"; Alejandro Amenabar's "Open Your Eyes"; Maria Ripoll's "Twice Upon a Yesterday"; Nick Hamm's "Talk of Angels"; Pedro Almodóvar's "Live Flesh" and Foreign Language Oscar-winner "All About My Mother"; Ted Demme's "Blow"; "Captain Corelli's Mandolin" opposite Nicolas Cage; erotic thriller "Vanilla Sky" with Tom Cruise; "Masked & Anonymous"; Cannes-opener "Fanfan la Tulipe"; "Don't Tempt Me"; Sergio Castellitto's "Don't Move," for which she was honored with a David Di Donatello Award (Italian Oscar) and European Film Award for Best Actress; and "Volver," which again teamed her with Pedro Almodóvar and won the Best Actress awards at the European Film Awards, Goya Awards, Cannes Film Festival, and received both Golden Globe and Oscar nominations.

Cruz went on to star in "Elegy" opposite Sir Ben Kingsley; Woody Allen's "Vicky Cristina Barcelona," for which she won an Oscar, a BAFTA, and an NYFCC Award for Best Supporting Actress; Almodovar's "Broken Embraces"; Rob Marshall musical "Nine," which garnered her SAG, Golden Globe and her third Oscar nomination; blockbuster hit «Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides»; Woody Allen's «To Rome with Love»; Ridley Scott thriller "The Counselor"; Sergio Castellitto's "Twice Born"; Ben Stiller's "Zoolander 2"; Louis Leterrier's "The Brothers Grimsby"; Fernando Trueba's "The Queen of Spain"; Kenneth Branagh's "Murder on the Orient Express"; and Fernando Leon de Aranoa's "Loving Pablo."

In 2018 she made her US television debut as Donatella Versace in FX's "American Crime Story: The Assassination of Gianni Versace." Her performance led her to an Emmy, SAG and Golden Globe nominations. In March 2018 she was presented with the Honorary César Award for her collective work in film from France's Academy of Arts and Techniques of Cinema during the 43rd César Awards ceremony in Paris. Cruz most recently starred in Asghar Farhadi's psychological thriller "Everybody Knows," and recently reunited with Antonio Banderas in Pedro Almodóvar's 2019 release "Pain & Glory." Next up, Cruz will appear in Simon Kinberg's large-scale espionage film "355."

Édgar Ramírez - René González

Edgar Ramírez recently starred as iconic fashion designer and cultural innovator Gianni Versace in the Award-winning FX anthology series "American Crime Story: The Assassination of Gianni Versace." for which he received Emmy and Golden Globe nominations for his performance. Next up, Ramírez is set to star as the lead in the film "The last days of American Crime"; Disney's "Jungle Cruise"; Simon Kinberg's spy thriller "355"; and David E. Kelley and Susanne Bier limited HBO series "The Undoing".

Credits include Netflix fantasy thriller, "Bright", directed by David Ayers; Goya-winning director Pablo Trapero's "The quietude"; Stephen Gaghan directed thriller, "Gold"; DreamWorks feature "The girl on the train"; "Hands of stone"; David O'Russell's "Joy"; and Warner Brother's remake of "Point Break".

Ramírez received a wide array of awards attention and critical acclaim for his starring roles in "Zero Dark Thirty", "The Liberator" and "Carlos", for which he was nominated for a Golden Globe Award, Screen Actors Guild Award and an Emmy Award, and won a César Award. In 2012, Ramírez received an Alma Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Motion Picture Drama for his role as Ares in the Warner Bros film "Wrath of the Titans".

In addition to acting, Ramirez is an active philanthropist and currently serves as a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF in Venezuela. He also supports UN Women, co-heading the He For She initiative, and participated in the campaign for breast cancer in Venezuela, along with Amnesty International's "Don't Shoot" campaign to help eliminate the number of injuries and deaths caused by the irresponsible use of guns.

Gael García Bernal – Manuel Viramontez

Gael García Bernal is one of the great actors of today, recently gaining critical acclaim and a Golden Globe award for Best Actor in a Comedy Series for his role in “Mozart in the Jungle”, which also won the Golden Globe for Best Comedy Series. He was also nominated in 2017 for the second season.

Having worked as an actor since childhood in Mexico, Bernal made his feature film debut in Alejandro González Iñárritu’s Academy Award-nominated “Amores perros”, which earned him a Silver Ariel Award (Mexico’s equivalent of the Oscar) as well as a Silver Hugo Award at the Chicago International Film Festival. Bernal has starred in countless films including Alfonso Cuarón’s Academy Award-nominated “Y tu Mamá También” (“And Your Mother Too”) and “The Motorcycle Diaries” (“Diarios de motocicleta”). Bernal received a BAFTA and Satellite Award nomination in 2005 for Best Actor for his work in “The Motorcycle Diaries”. In 2006, Bernal was recognized by BAFTA again with a nomination in the Rising Star category, acknowledging new talent in the acting industry. Other credits include “Rosewater”; “El ardor”; “Desierto”; “Neruda”, which was also nominated for a 2017 Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture - Foreign Language; Academy Award-winning Pixar-animated feature “Coco”; “The Kindergarten Teacher”; “Museo”; and “The Accused”. Next up he stars in Pablo Larraín’s Chilean drama “Ema”, and he recently directed his second feature film, “Chicuarotes”.

Ana de Armas – Ana Margarita Martínez

For more than a decade Cuban born actress Ana de Armas has made a name for herself in Spain and America and is now becoming one of the industry’s most sought-after actresses. Working with critically acclaimed directors and actors, de Armas has brought to the big screen compelling performances, warmth, passion and versatility. She will next co-star in Rian Johnson’s “Knives Out,” and “Sergio,” a biopic about Brazilian diplomat Sergio Vieira de Mello. de Armas is currently in production for Andrew Dominik’s “Blonde” in which she will portray icon Marilyn Monroe. Earlier this summer it was announced that de Armas will join the 25th installment of the James Bond franchise, «No Time To Die,» directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga.

In 2018, she received critical acclaim for her performance in “Corazón,” a short film directed by John Hillcoat which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival. Additional credits include Denis Villeneuve’s Academy Award-winning neo-noir science fiction film “Blade Runner 2049” alongside Ryan Gosling and Harrison Ford, Venezuelan filmmaker Jonathan Jakubowicz’s “Hands of Stone” opposite Edgar Ramirez and Robert De Niro, and Todd Phillips’ “War Dogs” alongside Miles Teller and Jonah Hill.

Ana de Armas made her feature film debut in “Una Rosa De Francia” for the Cuban Institute of Cinematography. Her additional Spanish credits include: “Por Un Punado De Besos,” “Faraday,” “Blind Alley” and “Sex, Party & Lies.” de Armas resides in Los Angeles.

Wagner Moura – Juan Pablo Roque

Wagner Moura is widely considered one of South America’s most popular actors. Moura starred as the notorious Pablo Escobar in Netflix’s original series “Narcos,” for which he received a Golden Globe nomination. He continued the role of Escobar in “Narcos: Mexico.”

Moura’s film credits include Walter Salles’ “Behind the Sun”; Berlin Film Festival Golden Bear-winner “Elite Squad”; Neill Blomkamp’s “Elysium”; Heitor Dhalia’s “Bald Mountain”; Karim Anouz’ “Praio Do Futuro”; comedy “VIPs”; and Stephen Daldry crime thriller “Trash” set in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Moura recently completed production on “Sergio,” the Greg Barker’s Netflix biopic about diplomat Sergio Vieira de Mello, and is currently in pre-production on “Sweet Vengeance,” a mystery directed by Brian De Palma.

Moura has for over a decade been an advocate in Brazil for laws and political campaigns that worked to help end forced labor, and the United Nations’ International Labor Organization last year gave Moura a three years appointment to work with the agency to draw attention to end forced labor worldwide. He launched the ILO’s “50 for Freedom” campaign asking nations to ratify the protocol of the 1930 Forced Labor Convention. Moura is also the lead singer/songwriter of the rock band Sua Mãe («Your Mother”), featured on the cover of the October 2010 issue of Rolling Stone.

Moura grew up in the small town of Rodelas, Bahia with his mother Alderiva, father José and younger sister Lediane. Moura and his spouse of 15 years, Sandra Delgado, an acclaimed Brazilian photographer and documentarian reside in both Rio de Janeiro and their native Bahia with their three young sons, Bem, Salvador and José.

Leonardo Sbaraglia

Leonardo Sbaraglia is one of the most loved and recognized actors in all of Latin America.

His career contains key titles from the last years of Spanish and Argentine cinema such as “Dolor and Gloria”, “El Otro Hermano”, “Nieve Negra”, “Relatos Salvajes”, “Carmen”, “Intacto”, for which he won the Goya in 2002, “Plata Quemada”, and “Wild Horses”, among others. He alternates his work in cinema with great television productions such as the latest series of Movistar Plus: Felix, The Hypnotist, and Epitaphs for HBO, Dos Lunas for Fox or Farsantes.

In the theater he has released works such as: The territory of power, Closer, or In the solitude of the cotton fields . Upcoming releases include “Trilogía del Baztán” (El legado de los huesos and “Ofrenda en la tormenta) and “Orígenes Secretos,” and the series «Maradona Sueño Bendito» for Amazon Studios.

CAST

Olga Salanueva
René Gonzalez
Manuel Viramontez
Juan Pablo Roque
Ana Margarita Martinez
Jose Basulto
Raul Ernesto Cruz Leon
Irma
Luis Posada Carrilles

Penélope Cruz
Édgar Ramírez
Gael García Bernal
Wagner Moura
Ana de Armas
Leonardo Sbaraglia
Nolan Guerra Fernandez
Osdeymi Pastrana Miranda
Tony Plana

CREW

Written and directed by

Olivier Assayas

Inspired by

« Last soldiers of the Cold War »
by Fernando Morais

Producers

Rodrigo Teixeira
Charles Gillibert
Lourenço Sant'Anna

Executive producers

Sylvie Barthet
Lourdes Garcia
Lia Rodriguez
Sophie Mas
Adrian Guerra
Miguel Angel Faura
Geneviève Lemal

Co-producers

Alexandre Mallet-Guy
Matteo de Castello
Geneviève Lemal

Directors of photography

Yorick Le Saux
Denis Lenoir

Production designer

François-Renaud Labarthe

Editor

Simon Jacquet

1st assistants director

Luc Bricault
Matthew Gledhill

Costume designers

Jurgen Doering
Samantha Chijona Garcia

Music

Eduardo Cruz

Direct sound

Nicolas Cantin

Sound editor

Gert Janssen

Mixer

Alek Goose

Script supervisor

Christelle Meaux

Make-up artist

Thi Than Tu Nguyen

Hair stylist

Peggy Bernaerts

Casting directors

Antoinette Boulat
Maria Mercedes Hernandez Lazaro
Valerie Hernandez
Anna Gonzalez

Post production supervisors

Olivier Goinard,
Nicolas Moreau,
Nicolas Cantin,
Aude Baudasse

International Sales

Orange Studio

Italian Distribution

Bim

French Distribution

Memento Films Distribution
Orange Studio



A coproduction CG Cinéma, RT Features, Nostromo Pictures, Wasp Network AIE, Scope Pictures,
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