

A TWELVE-YEAR NIGHT

A FILM BY ALVARO BRECHNER

Produced by
Tornasol
Alcaravan AIE

In collaboration with
Haddock Films – Aleph Media
Manny Films
Salado

With the participation of
Movistar +
Netflix

With the support of
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Special Jury Award at the 2015 San Sebastián Co-production Market
ARTE international award at the 2016 Berlinale Co-production Market

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A TWELVE-YEAR NIGHT

DIRECTED AND WRITTEN BY:

ALVARO BRECHNER (*Bad Day To Go Fishing, Mr. Kaplan*)

SHORT SYNOPSIS

1973. Uruguay is governed by a military dictatorship. One autumn night, three Tupamaro prisoners are taken from their jail cells in a secret military operation. The order is precise: "As we can't kill them, let's drive them mad." The three men will remain in solitary confinement for twelve years. Among them is Pepe Mujica – later to become president of Uruguay.

LONG SYNOPSIS

September 1973. Uruguay is controlled by a military dictatorship. The Tupamaro guerrilla movement has been crushed and dismantled the previous year. Its members have been imprisoned and tortured.

On an ominous autumn night, nine Tupamaro prisoners are abducted from their cells as part of a secret military operation that will last for 12 years. From that moment forth, the prisoners will be rotated through several barracks all over the country as they are subjected to a macabre experiment; a new form of torture with the objective of surpassing the limits of mental endurance. The military order is very clear: "Since we couldn't kill them, we are going to drive them insane".

For over a decade, the prisoners will remain isolated in minuscule cells where they spend most of their time hooded, bound, in silence, deprived of basic needs, undernourished, and with their senses reduced to the bare minimum.

Their bodies and minds pushed beyond their limits, **A Twelve-Year Night** tells the story of how they managed to survive, maintaining their will and strength by recreating their own world, vision and fantasy in order to escape the terrible reality that condemned them to inescapable madness.

This film is based on personal accounts from three of the most important figures in modern-day Uruguay: José "Pepe" Mujica, former President of Uruguay, Mauricio Rosencof, famous writer and poet and Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro, former Defence Minister of Uruguay.

CAST

José "Pepe" Mujica	ANTONIO DE LA TORRE
Mauricio Rosencof	CHINO DARÍN
Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro	ALFONSO TORT
Psychiatrist	SOLEDAD VILLAMIL
Graciela	SILVIA PÉREZ CRUZ
Military commander	CÉSAR TRONCOSO
Rosa	NIDIA TELLES
Lucy	MIRELLA PASCUAL

BIOFILMOGRAPHY

ANTONIO DE LA TORRE (José "Pepe" Mújica)

Antonio de la Torre Martín obtained a Journalism degree but he always knew that he wanted to become an actor, so he combined his work at Canal Sur with several acting courses and studies at Cristina Rota's Art School.

His first role was in *The Worst Years of Our Lives* (1994), directed by Emilio Martínez Lázaro.

He enjoyed success in TV thanks to the miniseries *Padre Coraje* where he played the role of El Loren, although he had also participated in *Lleno por favor*, a successful series starring Alfredo Landa.

He is a well-known actor in Spanish short films, including the first works of Daniel Sánchez Arévalo, (*Profílixis* o *Física II*) who subsequently cast him in a main role in his first feature film, *Dark Blue Almost Black* (2006), which earned him the Goya for the best supporting actor in 2007. Another of his usual directors, Álex de la Iglesia, has cast De La Torre as a supporting actor in most of his films (*Dying of Laughter* in 1999, *Common Wealth* in 2000, *As Luck Would Have It...*), until 2010, when the director from Bilbao offered him the main role in *The Last Circus*, which earned him a Goya nomination.

In 2009 he starred in Sánchez Arévalo's second film, *Fat People*, which earned him a second Goya nomination. He later participated in several films, including *The Island Inside* (2009), *Lope* (2010), and *Cousinhood* (2011). In December 2008, he starred in his first theatre play, a production of the National Drama Centre: Alfonso Sastre's *La taberna fantástica*, directed by Gerardo Malla.

He has also featured in 2 feature films directed by Pedro Almodóvar, *Volver* and *I'm So Excited!*, and has worked with Manuel Martín Cuenca in *Half of Oscar* and *Cannibal*, which earned him the Feroz Best Actor Award from the Cinema Scriptwriters' Guild and the Toulouse Spanish Film Festival, as well as a Best Actor Goya nomination. In 2012, he was nominated twice for a Goya as Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor for his roles in *Unit 7* and *Invader*. He has also worked in two foreign productions, playing English-speaking characters in *United Passions* alongside Gerard Depardieu and directed by Frédéric Auburtn and an *Untitled Jim Loach Project*, directed by Jim Loach.

His most recent films have been *Marshland* directed by Alberto Rodriguez, *Hablar* directed by Joaquín Oristrell, and, this year, *The realm* by Rodrigo Sorogoyen.

ALFONSO TORT (Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro)

Alfonso Tort (39) is a cinema and theatre actor. He graduated from EMAD (Uruguayan Multidisciplinary Drama School).

He starred in the feature film *25 watts, opera prima* of Pablo Stoll and Juan Pablo Rebella. The film participated in several international festivals and received multiple awards, including the Best Male Actor at the 3rd Buenos Aires International Independent Film Festival (BAFICI). In 2003, he appeared in the multi-award-winning film *Whisky*, directed by Pablo Stoll and Juan Pablo Rebella.

He also appeared in *Bad Day to Go Fishing*, opera prima of Alvaro Brechner, and *Buenos Aires 1977* directed by Adrián Israel Caetano, both of which participated in the Cannes Film Festival.

His most recent films include *Capital (todo el mundo va a Bs.As.)* from director Augusto González Polo, *El Cinco* from director Adrián Biniez, *Las olas* from director Adrián Biniez and *A twelve-year night*, directed by Alvaro Brechner. His next acting project will be a fictional film about Uruguayan writer Felisberto Hernández, directed by the Argentine Javier Olivera.

CHINO DARÍN (Mauricio Rosencof)

Darín trained as an actor in theatre workshops such as Timbre 4 and Bob Mc Andrew's camera acting seminar (2011) and also attended the schools directed by Agustín Alezzo (2009) and Nora Moseinco (2010), among others.

His first roles were in TV, where he featured in Argentine series *Alguien que me quiera* (2010), *Los únicos* (2011-2012) and *Farsantes* (2013).

His cinema debut was in the film *En Fuera de Juego* (2012) which was followed by *Death in Buenos Aires* (2013) by Natalia Meta, *Angelita la Doctora* (2014) by Helena Trittek, *Oneself* (2014) by Gabriel Arregui, *Volley* (2014) by Martn Piroyansky and *Safe Passage* (2014) by Diego Corsini.

In 2015, he was nominated as best actor in the Martín Fierro and Tato Awards for his starring role in the series *Historia de un clan*. That same year, he also worked in the feature film *The Silence of the Sky* (2015) by Marco Dutra, as well as the series *El hipnotizador*, *Viudas e hijas del rock* and *El Clan Puccio* (2015).

He combined shooting the series *The Embassy* (2016), with his role in *The Laws of Thermodynamics* by Mateo Gil (2018) and *The Queen of Spain* (2016) by Fernando Trueba. His most recent films are *A Twelve-Year Night* by Alvaro Brechner and *Mirage* by Oriol Paulo.

TECHNICAL STAFF

Script and Direction **ALVARO BRECHNER**

Based on the book *Memorias del calabozo (Memoirs from the cell)* by MAURICIO ROSENCOF and ELEUTERIO FERNANDEZ HUIDOBRO

Production director	JOSEÁN GÓMEZ CAROLINA URBIETA MARIANA SECCO
Delegate production	DANIELA ALVARADO
Cinematography	CARLOS CATALÁN
Editing	IRENE BLECUA NACHO RUÍZ CAPILLAS
Assistant director	JAVIER PETIT
Original score	FEDERICO JUSID
Additional music	SILVIA PÉREZ CRUZ
Artistic direction	LAURA MUSSO
Costume designer	ALEJANDRA ROSASCO
Make-up artist	ALMUDENA FONSECA
Hair stylist	KENYAR PADILLA
Sound direction	MARTIN TOURON
Direct sound	EDUARDO ESQUIDE MARTÍN TOURON
Sound design	NACHO ROYO - VILLANOVA
Mixing	LAURENT CHASSAIGNE
Casting	JUANA MARTÍNEZ

PRODUCERS

The film has been produced by Tornasol/Alcaravan (Spain), with the participation of co-producers Haddock Films-Aleph Media (Argentina), Manny Films (France) and Salado (Uruguay).

The film's producers are **Mariela Besuievsky** and **Gerardo Herrero** from Tornasol Films in Spain (Best Foreign Language Film Oscar for *The secret in their eyes* (2009)). With an extensive catalogue of over 160 films, it is one of the most relevant producers in Spanish cinema. It is also one of the most veteran, having been in the business since 1993 with *Madregilda*, which was followed by well-known productions such as *Land and Freedom* (1995), *Extasis* (1996), *Comanche Territory* (1997), *No one writes to the colonel* (1999), *Sin noticias de Dios* and *Son of the Bride* (2001), *The longest penalty shot in the world* (2005), *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* (2006), *The oxford murders* (2008), *The last circus* (2010), *Chinese take-away* (2011), *Four Season in Havana: The Winds of Lent* and *May God save us* (2016) and *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* (2018).

Vanessa Ragone from Haddock Films, founded in Buenos Aires in 2006, specialises in production for cinema, television and commercials. Among her best-known projects are *The Desert Bride* (Cannes 2017), *At the end of the tunnel* (2016) and *Everybody Has a Plan* (2012). She has worked both at national and international level, as shown by *The secret in their eyes*, a co-production which won the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar in 2010.

Aleph Media, founded by **Fernando Sokolowicz** over 30 years ago, focuses on production, communication and distribution of audio-visual content, with over 60 feature films and extensive experience at international festivals, including *Widows* (2011), *Verdades Verdaderas*, *La vida de Estela* (2011) and *La punta del diablo* (2006).

Manny Films' producers are **Birgit Kemner** and **Philippe Gompel**, who have worked in films such as *Lascars* (Critics' Week Official Selection at Cannes 2009), *Et si en vivait tous ensemble* (Official Selection Locarno 2011), *The Ardor* (Official Selection Cannes 2014), *Human Capital* (Best Film Award Italy 2014), *The Chosen Ones* (Official Selection Cannes 2015, Un Certain Regard and Best Film Award Mexico 2016) and *La Pazza Gioia* (Official Selection Cannes 2016, Quinzaine des Realisateurs and Best Film Award Italy 2017) among others.

Mariana Secco from SALADO. Founded in Uruguay in 1994, Salado is one of the leading audio-visual companies in the country, with offices in Uruguay, Argentina and Puerto Rico. A successful trajectory in advertising gave place in 2003 to Salado Cine a cinema production business. In 2008, it won the Best Exporter of Audio-visual Services in Uruguay Award from the Uruguayan National Chamber of Commerce and Services. Its productions include *Mr. Kaplan* (2014), *Aire libre* (2014) and *The Story of Artigas* (2011).

ALVARO BRECHNER

Alvaro Brechner was born in Montevideo in 1976 and has lived in Madrid since 2000. He graduated in Social Communication (Uruguay Catholic University, 1998) and obtained a Masters in Creative Documentary (Barcelona University, 1999).

Between 2000 and 2007, he directed several short films (*The Nine Mile Walk*, *Sofa*, *Second Anniversary*) which premiered in over 140 International Festivals and were sold to TVs in over 15 countries, as well as dozens of documentaries (*La Ley del Ring*, *Sefarad Testimonio de una ausencia*, *Papá*, *Por qué somos del Atleti*), shown in Spanish national TV, Canal Historia and Canal Odisea.

In 2009, he wrote and directed his first feature film, ***Bad Day to Go Fishing***, which participated in the Official Section of the Cannes Critics' Week. The film also took part in over 60 international festivals and garnered over 30 awards. In Uruguay, the film received 10 Fipresci awards, including Best Opera Prima and Best Uruguayan Film. In Spain, the film obtained three CEC nominations for Best Film, Best Script and Best Actor. In addition, the film represented Uruguay as Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Oscar Awards.

Mr. Kaplan, his second film (2014) was selected for over 40 International Festivals, received 7 Platino nominations in 2015, including Best Film, Best Director and Best Script, as well as nominations as Best Ibero-American Film at the 2015 Goya Awards, Forqué Awards and Ariel Awards. Sold for distribution in theatres in over 25 countries, it later became the Uruguayan representative at the 2015 Academy Oscar Awards as Best Foreign Film.

In December 2015, Brechner was named as one of the 10 emerging talents of Ibero-American cinema by Variety international magazine.

Brechner has obtained the Uruguayan National Literature Prize and has taken part in several festivals as a member of the jury, including the Cannes Festival Critics' Week, Warsaw, Malaga, Sofa, Gijon, Torino and Valencia. ***A Twelve-Year Night*** is his third film.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

What is left of a man after everything has been stripped away? Uncommunicated, isolated in time, with no stimuli and no tangible place to hold on to, his own senses start to betray him. But deep inside there is something that nobody can take away: his imagination. ***A twelve-year night*** is, above all, a descent into the abyss. Based on a true story, it shows how three men were gradually dispossessed of everything that made them individuals over 12 years. They endured a physical and mental process designed to drive them insane with the ultimate goal of destroying any resistance within their deepest selves. They were forced to reinvent themselves from the remainders of their human condition in order to resist one of the most sinister ordeals imaginable.

As director and writer, this project has taken me more than four years of research and documentation. One of the key challenges was to avoid making a prison film, but rather an existential journey. The military order was very clear: "Since we couldn't kill them, we will drive them insane." Beyond a meticulous historical recreation of the events, I sought to portray an aesthetic and sensory journey, allowing the audience to experience how to survive such an inner battle.

The 3 actors (Antonio de la Torre, Chino Darín and Alfonso Tort) had to undergo a very demanding mental and physical conditioning program (each lost around 15 kilos) in order to bring us closer to the extreme circumstances they suffered. The staging aimed to make us feel next to them, immersing us in the struggle that a man orchestrates in order to remain human.

It was a dark journey, but also a very rewarding one. Full of complexities and challenges, the film reaffirmed my belief that, even in those moments when circumstances may lead us to believe that everything is lost, human strength and endurance should never be underestimated

- Alvaro Brechner (Director, writer) -

PRODUCTION DATA

Producers	MARIELA BESUIEVSKY (TORNASOL) GERARDO HERRERO (TORNASOL) VANESSA RAGONE (HADDOCK FILMS) FERNANDO SOKOLOWICZ (ALEPH MEDIA) BIRGIT KEMNER (MANNY FILMS) PHILIPPE GOMPEL (MANNY FILMS) ALCARAVAN FILMS AIE
Co-producers	MARIANA SECCO (SALADO)
Executive producers	MARIELA BESUIEVSKY VANESSA RAGONE
With the collaboration of	MOVISTAR + ZDF / ARTE NETFLIX
In association with	STÈPHANE SORLAT GUY AMON
With the support of	ICAA INCAA L'AIDE AUX CINEMAS DU MONDE CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINEMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMEE INSTITUT FRANÇAIS EURIMAGES IBERMEDIA
International sales	LATIDO FILMS
Distribution in Spain	SYLDAVIA CINEMA

TECHNICAL SPECS

Colour	
Projection format	Digital, Scope 1:2.35
Running time	123 min
Sound	Wav 5.1
Nationality	Spain – Argentina - France
Locations	Navarra - Madrid – Segovia (SPAIN) Montevideo (URUGUAY)
Original version	Castilian Spanish

Press Contact ELLAS COMUNICACIÓN

Elio Seguí - elio@ellascomunicacion.com - +34 636 608 541

Deborah Palomo - deborah@ellascomunicacion.com - +34 639 635 510

Nuria Terrón - nuria@ellascomunicacion.com - +34 648 634 103