

## Immigration drama recounts abandoned mom's real-life struggle to survive in U.S.

Written by Film Review by Kam Williams

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*Entre Nos*

Mariana (Paola Mendoza) had every reason to be optimistic when she arrived in New York City from Colombia with her 6 year-old daughter (Laura Montana Cortez) and 10 year-old son (Sebastian Villada Lopez) in tow. After all, she was rejoining her husband who had immigrated to the U.S. ahead of the rest of the family in order to get a solid foothold in the land of opportunity.

However, the sweet reunion proves to be short lived, after Antonio (Andres Munar) comes home very late from work one night with some good news and some bad news. The good news is that he's just got a better job in Miami. The bad news is that his wife and children can't relocate there with him, although he does promise to support them the interim until he's sufficiently settled for them to move down, too.

But the creep simply skips town, and never bothers to send a penny or even offer any explanation. And by the time that the truth finally sinks in that Antonio has ostensibly abandoned her for a mistress, Mariana only has about \$50 left to her name with rent due and mouths to feed. Since she barely speaks English, the desperate woman starts selling meat patties on the streets of Queens to keep a roof over their heads. When that proves disastrous, she and the kids have to resort to dumpster diving for recyclable cans and bottles to redeem.

Unfortunately, the tale of woe spun here isn't merely a fictional drama but an actual account of an American Dream deferred. For *Entre Nos* is a thinly-veiled autobiography written by, directed by and starring Paola Mendoza, a Bogota-born beauty who now plays her own mother, although she was the young daughter at the time the real-life events in the picture transpired.

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The film unfolds as a series of relentlessly-grim scenarios which add up to paint a plausible picture of the enormous challenges encountered by foreigners endeavoring to adjust to this country's unforgiving inner-city environs. Miraculously, against all odds, the hardy trio not only survives but ultimately flourishes, with the audience being informed via telling, closing credits postscripts that matriarch Mariana eventually remarried and had another daughter, that her stoic, young son grew up to become a successful college administrator, and that little Paola became a brilliant filmmaker who fashioned this uplifting bio-pic as a cinematic tribute to her beloved mother.

A bittersweet saga chronicling both the rough lot of the recent immigrant and the indomitability of the human spirit.

Excellent (4 stars)

Unrated

In Spanish with subtitles.

Running time: 80 Minutes

Distributor: IndiePix Films

To see a trailer for *Entre Nos*, visit:

<http://entrenosfilm.com/videos/trailer>