

Cautionary Tale Uncovers Another Reason to Avoid Mexico

Written by Film Review by Kam Williams



Daniel & Ana

I don't know anybody who's considering Mexico as a vacation destination anymore, given the kidnappings of the rich for ransom, the mass murders in resort areas like Acapulco, the ever-escalating body count in the drug wars and the recent employment of bombings as a terrorist tactic. If, in spite of all of the above, you're still thinking of venturing South of the Border, you might want to check out Daniel & Ana, a cautionary tale blowing the covers off another problem plaguing the troubled region.

Directed by Michel Franco, Daniel & Ana opens with a warning which reads, "Based on real events. The movie tells the story exactly as it happened. Only the names were changed."

At the point of departure, we are introduced to Daniel (Dario Yazbek Bernal) and Ana Torres (Marimar Vega), a brother and sister lucky enough to be raised in the lap of luxury in a country cleanly divided into rich and poor. Best of friends, he's a high school student and looks up to his big sis who commutes daily to a nearby college campus. The only evidence of sibling rivalry is their healthy competition when training to run a marathon.

At 16, Daniel is experiencing his first pangs of sexual awakening, while Ana is engaged to a guy who would like to relocate to Spain after the wedding. But the blushing bride-to-be will hear none of it, insisting that they'll remain in Mexico City to be near her tight-knit family.

The Torres' idyllic existence is irreversibly altered that fateful day the two are abducted and tossed into the trunk of their own car by pornographers with a kinky agenda. Apparently, there is a big black market for incest flicks in Mexico, and these sickos put guns to the pair's heads not for money, but to force them to engage in intercourse with each other on camera.

The bulk of the picture is devoted to the fallout following the unspeakable violation, starting with traumatized Daniel and Ana's inability to look each other in the eye. Furthermore, not only do they fail to report the crime to the authorities, but they can't bring themselves to discuss it with their parents, a shrink or even each other. Instead their every relationship remains ruined by a humiliation which might at any moment further shame them by resurfacing on the internet in

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graphic detail.

The cinematic equivalent of a PSA shedding light on an underreported vacation risk the Mexican Board of Tourism will never mention in its beckoning commercials.

Very Good (3 stars)

Unrated

In Spanish with subtitles.

Running time: 90 Minutes

Studio: Strand Releasing

To see a trailer for Daniel & Ana, visit:

Or: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOolpaxZPsc>