

INTACTO

Spain 2002 1 hour 48 minutes Cert 15

DIRECTOR: Juan Carlos Fresnadillo
SCRIPT: Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, Andrés M. Koppel
CINEMATOGRAPHER: Xavi Giménez
EDITOR: Nacho Ruiz Capillas
MUSIC: Lucio Godoy
PRODUCTION DESIGN: César Macarrón
PRODUCER: (Executive) Fernando Bovaira, Enrique Lopez Lavigne

CAST:

Tomas	Leonardo Sbaraglia,
Federico	Eusebio Poncela,
Samuel	Max von Sydow,
Horacio	Guillermo Toledo
Sara	Monica Lopez
Alejandro	Antonio Dechent



As one reviewer said about this film “..you’ll need to pay attention, but it’s worth it...” However at heart *Intacto* is a simple film with only one premise the audience needs to buy into: the idea that luck is a real thing, and it can be stolen.

The phrase, "You must have all the luck," takes on new meaning in this Spanish drama with a philosophical bent, which builds a suspenseful thriller out of notions of luck and fate. Though occasionally silly, it is a movie with a genuine sense of mystery and a story that never fails to enthrall.

In *Intacto*'s world, luck is not a function of chance. People either have it or they don't, to



varying degrees. The luckiest of all can steal the luck of others, merely by touching them. Federico is one such fortunate person and his luck is also his job, calling a halt to winning streaks in a lonely casino. But he's bored in this remote outpost, anxious to break away from the casino and its boss, his foster father, Samuel. But Samuel, who's built an empire on his own formidable fortunes, regards these moves as treachery and metes out the ultimate punishment. He banishes him from the casino

and his goodbye hug robs Federico of his luck. Federico vows revenge.....

Intacto is an ambitious first feature of the young Spanish filmmaker, Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, and it is produced by Fernando Bovaira, who has been an important figure in the new Spanish cinema as producer of movies by Alejandro Amenábar (including *Open Your Eyes* and *The Others*) and Julio Medem, and the production designer, César Macarrón, was responsible for *The Devil's Backbone*, which WNCC screened last season.

Just like that film, "Intacto" is yet another example of the vibrancy of contemporary Spanish cinema, which, unlike the recycling factory that Hollywood has become, is brimming with fierce originality.



The film was shot in Madrid and also Tenerife, the director's home. He was asked how important was it for to shoot his first film in his homeland?

"When you make your first film, I think it is very important to incorporate your own identity from the place that you came from. In this case, it's important because the atmosphere of the story begins with the landscapes - so for me the use of Tenerife was very important. Although the style and look of the film, I think, is very international in a way."

Max von Sydow is superb as Samuel who has a sinister power to make people unlucky in life. His account of how he first learned to steal luck is unsettling.

The director was interviewed for the BBC film webpage about working with von Sydow:

"Was one of the reasons making Max von Sydow's character English-speaking to give the film a more international feel?"

He's a very cosmopolitan guy, having lived in many different countries - so he is international! I believe Max's character is the embodiment of my obsession with trust and possibility. He's like a pillar to the plot in the film. So we thought we'd need an important actor to express the charisma, authority, emotion, and darkness. There were a lot of colours this character could transmit, so Max was the first option.

Was it easy to get him, as he's stated he's in semi-retirement?

It was surprisingly easy. We sent him the script, and I thought it would be a long time until we heard from him. But he replied very quickly, and from the beginning he was very accepting of the project and the character.



Being a first-time director were you apprehensive about directing him? How did you approach directing him?

We had a joke between us. I'd tell him after takes, "Max, you were great, but do it again". Because I didn't know exactly how I could express my instructions. I felt directing Max was like playing a classic piano that sounds much better than you could imagine. It took only two or three takes per shot, he's very quiet and very cool, and he was inspirational. Being tense and nervous, as it was my first time, he relaxed everything and made me comfortable. So it became a privilege for a first-time director to work with someone like Max von Sydow. I was lucky!"

Disney has already bought the rights for a remake (another example of the studios inability or unwillingness to try an original idea). Mind you, *Intacto* is the classiest thriller to hit our screens in ages. Asked about the prospect of an American remake, the director stated "It's strange because in a way you feel happy because it's your first film, and an American producer has picked up the rights to the movie. But at the same time you feel fear, "Oh my god, what kind of movie are they going to make?" "

Well his original is sleek, stylish, and well acted, and just odd and suspenseful enough to be completely riveting. The film also deserves credit for at least having some ideas. It's that rare genre picture with a brain.

Iain McGlashan