

# A GUN IN EACH HAND

a film by Cesc Gay



# SYNOPSIS

A merciless portrait of 8 modern men and the women in their messy lives...

Therapy is turning bipolar J into the perfect psychoanalytical subject. E is back living with his mother after choosing his cat over his girlfriend. Adulterer S makes an awkward attempt to win back his ex-wife Elena. Various meds may not be helping G understand why his wife is having an affair, while L needs to clear up the confusion over the names of his wife and his dog. Married man P will be humbled after shamefully putting the moves on colleague Mamen at an office party. And Maria and Sara teach their tight-lipped husbands an ironic lesson about openly discussing feelings.

Love them or hate them, the familiar behavior of these 8 men in their forties creates an amusing emotional mosaic: the mystery of the masculine identity.



# COMMENTS FROM WRITER-DIRECTOR CESC GAY

## LOST AND CONFUSED

The role of men in our society has changed over the last decades and I have the feeling that we, the men, have been the last ones to notice it. I found appealing writing ruthlessly about us and that is the point of my film A GUN IN EACH HAND: to show and tell about this new place where we find ourselves: lost, confused and searching for a new identity. And this is always a wonderful situation for comedy.



# DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO MASCULINITY

A GUN IN EACH HAND is about the poor emotional relationship the characters have with themselves. Not accepting themselves, or lying to themselves a little.

Several topics are addressed but in a way they all have to do with a different approach to masculinity. That's it in a nutshell. I've already had a different life from my father's. We've become more feminine, we've entered into emotions, been forced to play at that. This is all good, but on the other hand, it hasn't been done very naturally. Men don't know how to cry, for example. Women cry in a natural way. It's nice... In general, we're playing at something else. We go to the cinema, a scene touches us, and 90% of men repress their feelings. I give that example because my idea was to touch on that pathetic emotional area -- the one in Javier Camara's character in the second episode of A GUN IN EACH HAND. He's profoundly pathetic, but it's very tender to watch him fighting against that moment where you can tell he doesn't want to be really honest with himself and he pretends, acting as if everything is all right. It's that irony in the masculine model that comes into question. And it starts crumbling right there in plain sight.



# NOWHERE TO HIDE

A GUN IN EACH HAND is structured around various encounters, some by chance, among its protagonists. Unexpected situations and surprising conversations, always narrated in real time, set completely in the present. This is above all a film of moments and the screenplay unfolds like a puzzle through different stories. The structure is something a bit more fragmented, no cutting or leaps in time. Just pure dialogue. The idea was to situate the characters in places where they had nowhere to hide. Because they are unprepared, the encounters just happen. That was the main premise, all based on generating dialogues. Later, each story had to be given an internal structure, twists and surprises that the situation could sustain.

## THE PATTERN OF A **MAN**

In an ensemble story there are lots of protagonists. The film intertwines all of their stories together. A GUN IN EACH HAND is different because we go from one story to the next. And the male characters don't have names which define their personalities. With no name, they're like babies before birth. That's what I tried to transmit to all the actors involved in the project. I asked them to trust that I had to take them all to a fairly uniform place. All the male characters in A GUN IN EACH HAND follow a certain pattern. The pattern of a man.

## THE **WOMEN**

In contrast to the male characters in A GUN IN EACH HAND, the women have names. They vary more from one another, because their characters serve different purposes. The role that Clara Segura plays with Javier Camara is different from Candela Peña or Leonor Watling. The women's roles help the plot and the drama. They give a different definition to the story being told. The women's characters have more personality. They're also more "spectacular", more challenging, especially Candela's character. I'm pleased because I think each of them is in the right place and they all share the space of the film, the general tone.

## **NOT** A TYPICAL COMEDY

I wrote the screenplay of A GUN IN EACH HAND in the tone I wanted to achieve with the characters/actors, and take them all to the same place. Because if their performances were too different, it was going to sound like different types of music played together. Humor is very delicate, a matter of tone. If this were a drama, I think we could have singled out their performances more. This film is not a typical comedy as it's a bit tougher or sadder. It's a long way from a film built on gags. It's not performed as a parody, but rather as a really authentic, deeply felt comedy. It's more solemn but still written from a dark comic point of view. It's the kind of humor that shakes you up a little. The actors had to work from this place that's uncommon in acting. It's a fragile place but I made it seem like it's not.





## LET'S TALK ABOUT **SEX**

In *A GUN IN EACH HAND*, there was no space to make sex visible, but there is a lot of talk about it. The sex is there, something that is part of many of the situations, a determining factor. In the segment with Ricardo Darin and Luis, it comes from infidelity. Candela's character also uses sex a lot in the connection formed and established with Eduardo. And there is also a curious, strange sex between Leonor and Alberto and Jordi and Cayetana. I've never liked graphic sex in films as a spectator. Actually, I find it quite boring really, unless it's an erotic film. I know how it will end, with the same shots as always unless there's something extra.

## I'M LEAVING **NOW**



The inspiration was to have the characters run into each other. If you pay attention, you will see that the characters are always sort of in the midst of leaving in *A GUN IN EACH HAND*. No one stays still: in the lobby, at the park, in the house. Except in the last segment in the car, where the characters stay in place. The whole movie occurs in that space of "Okay, I'm leaving now" and that was the place that sustains it all and also generates tension.

## NO ONE TOLD US **LIFE** WOULD BE LIKE THIS

The first story developed was the first episode in the film (with actors Eduard Fernandez and Leonardo Sbaraglia). It was sort of the embryo for the rest of the screenplay. Then everything else was put in place. It happened a bit like that with the structure of my film *IN THE CITY*. It was an ensemble film and we had more stories. We didn't use all of them. That's what happened here too. We could have made many more. We could have made another film. But in the end we used these... "No one told us life would be like this." That sentence is the origin of the story about Leonardo and Eduard. A friend of mine said it one day and I really liked it. When I heard that sentence I thought it was an instinctive way of expressing bewilderment. You reach a certain point in life and you think: it wasn't supposed to be like this! And then you go on with what Leonardo's character says: "Yeah, they give you no warning, not even a manual!" I thought this was a very graphic way of expressing how somebody can feel. And that's how the first story was born.

## WHAT DO YOU **TALK** ABOUT WHEN YOU MEET

In every episode there is a sentence that serves as sort of a main idea, the gist of what's going on. We made a list with co-screenwriter Tomàs Aragay. For example, the one for Ricardo Darin and Luis Tosar is when Luis says "Men hate losing". Never accepting defeat can generate a lot of problems. Why do all these things happen? Because you don't want to lose, you refuse defeat, you won't accept it. The last story about Alberto and Jordi is a little like what Leonor says: "What do you talk about when you meet?" We had some premises that kept us on track. The engines that held it all together. And there were others that were lost. Letting others help you was another premise we had, which is also very hard for men to do. Leonardo says it twice to Eduard. All these premises helped us structure the screenplay of A GUN IN EACH HAND.



## EDUARD **FERNANDEZ**

The only character I wrote with a specific actor in mind was the one played by Eduard Fernández because of my past connection with him and because he was at the start of all this. He has a lot of humor. It's also easy for me to write for Eduard, I have written a lot for him. In A GUN IN EACH HAND, Eduard's character, E, is much more transparent and sincere with what he feels. When he first runs into Leonardo Sbaraglia's character and asks about his father, Eduard is moved and I used that take. I would never have done so with more hermetic characters. But that was the idea of the film - letting them open up a bit more. Especially in the case of E, a less repressed character than Leonardo's character.



## **BACKGROUND** STORIES

The actors looked for their background stories more than I did. While rehearsing with them I invented things if they asked. Or with Anna, while creating costumes for the film, she'd ask me, "Cesc, what does Javier Cámara do?" "Well, he's a university professor." But it was almost an extra need for the costume designer or an actor. But I don't think it's necessary for the audience. Does it make a difference what Clara Segura's character does for a living? I don't think so.

# THE ENDING

I thought it was better to stop myself from inventing a strange ending. Instead I simply bring all the characters together visually, to tell a bit about the kind of bonds between them and leave it at that. Give it a little closure, the sensation of dessert. The end of a meal. A bit like IN THE CITY but obviously here it's a surprise. In IN THE CITY, you walk along with them and the whole time they're getting together and separating. In A GUN IN EACH HAND, when you see the shot of the party, the first person you see is the character played by Eduard Fernandez, and then the others start appearing, but we have no clue that is going to happen. But that was also the point, to add a little surprise or final twist.



# AN ATYPICAL SHOOT

A GUN IN EACH HAND was an atypical shoot because we shot over 7 or 8 months, although we only had 17 actual shooting days. In November, we started with Javier Cámara, then continued in February in the park with Ricardo Darin and Luis Tosar. That allowed me to focus deeply on each situation, which I liked, preparing it, shooting it, spending two or three days shooting. It's harder to shoot for seven weeks straight. You sleep and eat poorly, and you're tired all the time... So in this sense, it was very gratifying. I don't know if the numbers worked out the same for my producer. But when I started calling the actors and they came on board, it was obvious that we couldn't do it all at once because of their schedules.

# MUSIC

I had a feeling about the music while I was writing and shooting that there should be very little music but that it would have a role, a character that took you from one situation to another. And it would have to be a mix with a bit of humor referring to the guns in the title, there had to be a touch of the Western. And I found several pieces by different musicians and showed them to Jordi Prats with whom I had worked on in IN THE CITY and KRAMPACK/NICO & DANI. So we used a real rock and roll quartet in the background. I think that quite austere sound fits in well and gives A GUN IN EACH HAND a lot of character.

# A GUN IN EACH HAND

Titles are always complicated. "Going around with a gun in each hand" is the essence of the whole film. One day I wrote that line for Candela's character and I thought that it sounded masculine. It made me think of Clint Eastwood and Westerns and I thought it was a good title. I wrote it down as the title and later I showed it to our producer Marta Esteban and it stuck. It's long but I like it. Everyone asked me about the title's meaning. It brought on very funny, even sexual, comments of all types. I guess people like to think strange things.

# CESC GAY (writer-director)

Cesc Gay is known as one of the sharpest chroniclers of the Catalan urban middle-class. Born in Barcelona in 1967, he studied film in Barcelona and New York City, where he directed his first film, HOTEL ROOM (1998), along with the Argentine Daniel Gimelberg. In 2000 he makes into film the theatrical work KRAMPACK (aka NICO & DANI), which won many prizes after premiering in the Cannes Critics' Week. With EN LA CIUDAD (2003), he is successful with both the public and critics. The film is nominated for four Goya Awards, amongst these, Best Director and Best Screenplay, and winning a Best Actor prize for Eduard Fernandez. In 2006 he directs FICCIO, a film which earns him the Generalitat de Catalunya National Film Award. He has also worked for television, as creator of the series, like "Jet Lag".

# Feature Filmography

- 2012 A GUN IN EACH HAND (UNA PISTOLA EN CADA MANO)
- 2009 V.O.S.
- 2006 FICTION (FICCIO)
- 2003 IN THE CITY (EN LA CIUDAD)
- 2000 KRAMPACK (NICO & DANI)
- 1998 HOTEL ROOM (co-direction with Daniel Gimelberg)



# MAIN CAST

M. **Jordi Mollà** | J. **Leonardo Sbaraglia** | P. **Eduardo Noriega**  
G. **Ricardo Darín** | L. **Luis Tosar** | S. **Javier Cámara** | A. **Alberto San Juan**  
E. **Eduard Fernández** | Maria **Leonor Watling** | Elena **Clara Segura**  
Sara **Cayetana Guillén Cuervo** | Mamen **Candela Peña**



Jordi Mollà



Leonardo Sbaraglia



Eduardo Noriega



Ricardo Darín



Luis Tosar



Javier Cámara



Alberto San Juan



Eduard Fernández



Leonor Watling



Clara Segura



Cayetana Guillén Cuervo



Candela Peña

# MAIN CREW

Director **Cesc Gay** | Screenplay **Cesc Gay, Tomas Aragay** | Directors of Photography **Andreu Rebes** | Sound **Albert Gay, Ricard Casals, Kamikaze** | Editor **Frank Gutierrez** | Production Designer **Sylvia Steinbrecht** | Make Up **Karol Tornaria**  
Music **Jordi Prats** | Producer **Marta Esteban** | Production Company **Imposible Films (Barcelona)** with the participation of **TVE – TVC – Canal +** with support from **ICAA, ICEC**

# TECHNICAL DATA

Language **Spanish** | Locations **Barcelona** | Format **Digital (HD) transfer 35 mm. 1:1.85** | Running Time **97'** | Production Year **2012**  
Nationality **Spanish**

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