

Las Acacias
Argentina, Spain 2011

Director: Pablo Giorgelli

Screenplay: Pablo Giorgelli
Salvador Roselli

Director of Photography: Diego Poleri

Cast: German De Silva - Rubén
Hebe Duarte - Jacinta
Nayra Calle Mamani - Anahí

Running Time: 82 mins

Website: www.chelmsford-filmclub.co.uk
Twitter: [@ChelmsfordFilmC](https://twitter.com/ChelmsfordFilmC)



A simple film, with minimal dialogue, depicting a journey from a logging camp in Paraguay to Buenos Aires. A story about loss, loneliness and possible redemption, with beautifully understated acting, atmospheric use of sound and imaginative photography. All these factors combine to create a moving and honest portrayal of two troubled individuals sharing the cab of a truck travelling through a stark landscape. A delightful and engaging film.

This is an interview from Little White Lies with the director. **Spoiler alert** - Please note parts of the plot are discussed in some detail.

LWLies: The two lead acting performances in Las Acacias are incredible, and we understand that it was Hebe Duarte's first professional acting role. How did you go about finding your actors and directing their performances?

Thank you. To begin with I looked at the possibility of casting a real truck driver in the role of Ruben, but the problem I faced was that a lot of these guys wanted to improvise. I didn't want to make the film that way, I wanted to stay close to the script. I had a story that I wanted to tell. The film is actually very, very close to the original script. It hardly changed. There is one moment that was not in the script and that is when Nayra Calle Mamani, the baby playing Anahi, is being held by Ruben and they are looking at each other and she sneezes. That was obviously not scripted. The script had that moment of them looking at each other closely so the essence of the moment was there, but then she sneezed and it became something else.

I saw German de Silva many times over six months before I cast him and he jokes with me now that it took so long to cast him. But I wanted to make sure that the working relationship would be right. It's important to me to enjoy the process of making something and to enjoy working with people and for that I think the relationships have to be right. I wouldn't want to work in a situation where you would have to say that the end justified the means. So I am very careful before I decide to work with someone. I am very close to my creative team. So I was cautious before casting the Ruben role, but German was the best choice. With Hebe Duarte, we also searched for a while to find the person to play Jacinta, and Hebe gives a beautiful performance.

Anahi is a little island of joy and warmth between these two very closed off and damaged people.

Yes, she is such a joy to watch. Writing and directing a baby is really for me was really about writing things that a baby would do naturally so that we could then just wait for them to happen. So the moments when she reacts to things are very natural.

To see this tiny baby sitting in a the cab of the truck, a very hard, industrial environment, really underlines her vulnerability and by extension Jacinta's vulnerability. They are alone and their fate is in Ruben's hands. It's a very striking image.

Thank you. I wanted to show Jacinta going through this with her child because it's real and it happens. [Economic migration] is a reality for a lot of people.

Argentina is a real presence in the film. The story is a lot about place and borders.

Yes. I am an Argentinian and that informs how I see the world. The stories that I'm drawn to tell are about the things I see around me, but that is not to say that I wouldn't make a film about another place.

The film has a lot to say about loss and how people process loss differently.

Yes, definitely. I wrote and directed the film over a period of five years and it was a period of a lot of upheaval in my personal life. My father died, I went through a divorce, and so I felt that I wanted to write about people who have been through things and who are experiencing loneliness. Making the film was a long process and I put a lot of myself into it. That was another reason why it was so important to work with the right people when it came to making the film. And in the film Ruben is someone who has been hurt and who can't bear to let people in to his life anymore. The story is really about him getting past that and in that way it is similar to things that I have experienced in my own life.

The ending for Jacinta and Reben is left open which we loved because it felt so real as a depiction of two people entering into a relationship. They are uncertain but they're also hopeful.

That was the only scene I acted out as I wrote it. For every other scene I wrote sitting down at my computer but for that scene I needed to act it out to write it. It is a change in the dynamic because now Ruben is the vulnerable. Jacinta is surrounded by her family and she is loved but Ruben is all alone. He has kept people at arm's length and he is paying the price for it. But at this moment he has the courage to reach out to someone. It's the moment in the film that still affects me emotionally when I watch it, even though I've seen it so many times now.

What were your cinematic influences growing up in Argentina? When did you come to realise that you wanted to be a filmmaker?

I first got into film going to all-day showings at my local cinema. I saw Fellini, Truffaut, Bergman... and I don't know how much I took in but those images stayed with me. They made me want to be a director. I applied to film school in Argentina but I didn't get in so after leaving school I worked in a bank for several years. I was in a suit and tie everyday but I came to accept that it just wasn't for me. I applied again to a private film school and this time I got in. And I worked as an editor for a long time before getting into directing which was such an education in the film making process. The edit is so important because it is when a film comes together and becomes what it will be. So that was great experience for me and I learnt so much.

Next Film – **In Darkness** 9th April. Please note that this screening will begin at the earlier time of **7.30pm** and will include a Q&A with Henry Marguiles, the son of two survivors depicted in the film.