



# KAREN CRIES ON THE BUS

Directed by Gabriel Rojas Vera



**Colombia | 2011 | Drama | In Spanish with English Subtitles  
98 min. | 1:1.85 | Dolby Digital**

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## **SYNOPSIS**

Karen has left her slimy but successful husband Mario after ten years of marriage. She needs a fresh start to find out who she is and who she could be, despite her husband's proclamation that she can do absolutely nothing.

She walks out into Bogotá with no job, no friends, and hardly any money, but catches a break when she meets a hairdresser named Patricia at a cheap flophouse. With her younger and seemingly stronger friend by her side, Karen takes her first steps towards independence and self-discovery.

## **FESTIVALS AND AWARDS**

OFFICIAL SELECTION –

Berlin Int'l Film Festival  
Toulouse Latin American Film Festival  
Cartagena Film Festival  
Opendoek Film Festival  
Festivalissimo Film Festival (Montreal)

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The idea of KAREN was born due to the absence of a car in my life, which obliged me to permanently resort to public transportation, having to bear endless trips due to Bogotá's traffic nightmare. To distract myself a little, I strive to enjoy my journeys trying to guess on the lives of the other passengers, according to their facial features, clothing, gestures, movements and expressions. For everyone I invent a story, a conflict, a family, a social and financial situation, and even a political inclination. The bad thing is I can never know if my musings are accurate or not.

One day, I noticed the face of a young woman sitting across the aisle. She was staring out into nothingness, from that eternal traveling shot that a bus can provide. I had no doubt her eyes were not aiming at the cityscape, instead she was lost in her thoughts, forgetting about the surrounding passengers like an actress forgets and withdraws in front of the awesome Cyclops that is the camera. Then, the young woman could not contain her feelings and began to cry subtly in front of the audience who modestly looked at askance, as if in some way she generated a magical respect before the others. I did not look obliquely, I blatantly stared at her and was at different points tempted to approach her and ask her what motivated her to sob like that--perhaps invite her out for some coffee and to patiently listen to her, becoming her tissue, her friend, and even her lover--but my shyness did not let me do it, so I had to again invent a story before the cold computer screen.

At that time I was developing a synopsis for a short film about a housewife, economically dependent on her husband, who decided to split-up and start a new life. After the first version of the script, I realized that I was practically creating the second part to Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, which led me to a second argumentative question: What could have happened to Nora after she closed the door and left her husband? Then, under this new questioning I developed the second version, which became the premise of the other re-writes that came with time. However, I felt the character lacked temperament, so I imagined a combination of Nora Helmer and Ana Karenina together. Nora, the housekeeper who rebels herself and splits-up to be an independent woman, and Ana, the courage to pursue happiness overcoming the prejudices of a moralistic and hypocritical society that undervalues women.

When the final version of the script was finished, I was afraid that Karen's story was misunderstood by a society that refuses to see that there still exist, even if unconsciously, behavior patterns around gender. Could a woman identify with Karen? Would Karen be an old-fashioned story to be collected from the debris? Surprisingly, women who got to know the project first hand felt Karen way more deeply than I expected, and this pushed me to start the shooting of my film.

Although I had no intention of documenting a problem of today's society, but simply writing the story of a particular woman, it has surprised me that most women who have seen the movie have identified with Karen, because machismo is not a Latin American issue, but a worldly one that is disguised in many ways. Often women are still subjugated by men, and women also self-submit themselves to their men. Karen is not solely a Colombian story but a universal one, and without justifying separations, the film depicts women in a dignifying and honest way, and that is for me the true intent of KAREN CRIES ON THE BUS.

## **BIOGRAPHIES & FILMOGRAPHIES**

### **GABRIEL ROJAS VERA**

Director & Writer

Gabriel Rojas Vera was born in Bogotá, Colombia on October 15, 1977. He studied Film and Television at the National University of Colombia, where he delved into dramatic structure and screenwriting. He then wrote and directed several shorts, and made *Cristina*, finalist in the Feature Film Postproduction category of the FDC (Fondo para el Desarrollo Cinematográfico - Colombia, 2005).

In 2005, Gabriel wrote *KAREN CRIES ON THE BUS*, and was selected by the TyPA Foundation to participate in the XII Film Project Analysis Workshop in Colón, Argentina. In 2006 he was awarded the script development Grant from FDC. In 2007, *KAREN CRIES ON THE BUS* participated in the Script Writing Course organized by Unión Latina and Proimágenes en Movimiento, in the framework of the Cartagena de Indias International Film Festival, as it was awarded the FDC Grant for Feature Film Production. It had its international premiere at the 2011 Berlin Film Festival, in the Panorama section.

### **ÁNGELA CARRIZOSA**

Karen

Born in Bogotá, Colombia. She holds a B.A in International Relations from Brown University (USA) and a Law Degree from the University of the Andes in Bogotá. She studied acting in the USA and Colombia and continues this work in San Francisco, California, where she currently resides. Television appearances include "El Capo" and "Tiempo Final" (Fox-Telecolombia). She is a 2010 ATLAS Program Theatre Bay Area Finalist.

### **JUAN MANUEL DIAZ**

Eduardo

Is a Colombian stage, film and television actor, professionally trained both in his native country and in Spain. He has acted on several short films and the feature-length films *Esmeralda* and *KAREN CRIES ON THE BUS*. For the past two years he has had main roles on several national TV series such as "El Capo", "A Corazón Abierto" and "El Joe".

### **MARÌA ÁNGELICA SÁNCHEZ**

Patricia

Holds a Fine Arts degree from Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, and has been an actress on several theater productions. *KAREN CRIES ON THE BUS* is her screen debut.

## CREDITS

### CREW

Director	GABRIEL ROJAS VERA
Producer	ALEJANDRO PRIETO
Co-Producer	AUGUSTO SANDINO (SCHWEIZEN MEDIA) GROUP
Executive Producers	ALEJANDRO PRIETO, MARÍA TERESA SUÁREZ RAMÍREZ
Line Producer	CÉSAR HEREDIA CRUZ
1 <sup>st</sup> Assistant Director	FRANK BENITEZ PEÑA
2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director	JOHN FREDDY PARRA
Script Supervisor	BIVIANA MÁRQUEZ
Director of Photography	MANUEL CASTAÑEDA
Art Director	RAMSES BENJUMEA
Sound	CARLOS "EL NEGRO" RINCÓN
Editing	CARLOS CORDERO
Color Correction	MANUEL CASTAÑEDA, ANDRÉS MUÑOZ
Sound Editing and Mixing	ADRIANA MORENO, JOSE VALENZUELA (CINECOLOR DIGITAL-COLOMBIA)
Dolby Mixing	CARLOS CUEVAS
Original Score	RAFAÉL ESCANDON
Data to Film	JOSE LUIS GHEZZI, ANDREA DI BAJA (METROVISION PRODUCCIONES-ARGENTINA)
Laboratory	CINECOLOR-ARGENTINA

### CAST

Karen	ÁNGELA CARRIZOSA
Eduardo	JUAN MANUEL DIAZ
Patricia	MARÍA ÁNGELICA SÁNCHEZ