



A FILM BY ALISSON LARREA

51 mins /Color/ 2008 / Spanish, English & English Subtitles / Canada



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## **FESTIVALS AND AWARDS**

Winner Best Documentary Award, Marbella International Film Festival – Marbella, Spain

World Community Festival – Courtenay, Canada

Global Film Festival – Nanaimo, Canada

Our Island our World Film Festival – Salt Spring Island, Canada

Phoenix College Latino Film Festival – Phoenix, Arizona

Women’s International Film Festival – Miami, Florida

Ybor Festival of the Moving Image – Tampa, Florida

Toronto Hispano American Film Festival – Toronto, Canada

Non Violence International Film Festival – Cambridge, Canada

California Valley International Film & Music Festival – Temecula, California

Festival de Cine y Video SURrealidad – Colombia

St John’s Women International Film Festival – St. John’s, Canada

Boston Hispanic Film Festival – Boston, Massachusetts

Marbella International Film Festival – Marbella, Spain

Special Presentation in Santiago, Chile

Amnesty International Film Festival – Vancouver, Canada

International Documentary Festival – Quito, Ecuador

## SYNOPSIS

*"When you see your comrades and friends fall; when you witness people being tortured; when you experience the worst that a human being can do to another, at that point, you lose your innocence; you stop thinking that there is any goodness left in life."*

Félix Mora

**Memories of a Dreamer: The Journal of a Political Prisoner (Memorias de un soñador la historia de un prisionero político)** is a firsthand account of the hardship suffered by a political prisoner of Chile's cruel 1973 and inhumane dictatorship. More than 30 years after, Félix Mora relives the shocking details of the human rights abuses he suffered, his escape from the dictatorship, and the challenges he faced as an exile in Italy and Canada.

Félix's heartbreaking memories are shared with Jorge Aro, another political prisoner and friend of Félix, who was also held in the Stadium at the horrifyingly tender age of 15. Together, they share chilling details of their incarceration, re-visiting the "snail shell", where the most gruesome tortures took place. Exile was meant to silence those who fought the regime. For Félix, exile became a catalyst to fight for freedom and democracy.

Archival footage, dramatization and personal narratives bring to light an emotionally jolting and inspirational film where terror and injustice are overcome by courage and determination.

The film also challenges the assumption that refugees cannot participate in their homeland's struggles from abroad and still build successful lives in their adopted countries. It is also a testament to the lives of many Chilean exiles.

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

A topic touched upon by several documentaries has been the human rights violations committed against thousands of innocent Chileans during the totalitarian Pinochet regime. However, not much is known about those Chileans who were tortured and forced into exile because they did not agree with the new government policies.

Life gave me the opportunity to meet one of those people - Félix Mora - a great friend and colleague. I felt that telling his story would showcase how strong human willingness can be when faced with horrendous life challenges.

Felix's history, as he has indicated, reflects the lives of thousands of exiled Chileans who despite the tortures and humiliations they suffered, they never gave up in their struggle to have a more just Chile. They are individuals who from the distance continued to fight for the freedom of their country and suffered in a different way the negative consequences of the dictatorship. And at the same time, they developed a great life in their adopted countries without forgetting their roots.

This documentary is neither against nor in favour of a political or economic system. It is a showcase of how courage and determination can overcome terror and injustice.

*Alisson Larrea*

## **SUBJECT'S STATEMENT**

Making this documentary was yet another challenge that I have faced in my life. It is a challenge because it represented remembering events that were, and still are, painful; not only to me but also to my loved ones. Nevertheless, it has also helped me to overcome my past and, in a way, put closure to that chapter of my life.

At the same time, I feel that this documentary helps in a small humble way to pay tribute to thousands of Chilean exiles that never surrendered, and whose devotion and solidarity towards their people must be part of Chile's History.

Not all stories of political exiles are the same, but the feelings of pain, struggle and injustice are common factors that unite us. Consequently, these memories are not only personal; but they belong to thousands of dreamers that, like me, will never stop longing for a more righteous Chile.

*Felix Mora*

## **EXTRACTS FROM THE FILM**

### ***The Arrest***

“We went from being participants in a democratic government, to being considered common delinquents, criminals or people that shouldn’t deserve to live.”

### ***The Tortures***

“When you see your comrades and friends fall; when you see people being tortured, when you experience the worst that humans can do to one another, at that moment you lose all innocence and stop thinking that there is some goodness in life.”

### ***The Escape***

“I had to run from across the street, build some momentum, run and jump as I had never jumped in my life. I think I would have won some sort of medal with that jump. Naturally, I fell violently to the other side, but I was safe. That was my jump to the Italian Embassy, a jump to another way of life, a jump to the unknown that allowed me to begin a new phase in my life.”

### ***The Exile***

“On many occasions I had to sleep in plazas because I had no means to subsist. It was a very tough and emotional time. On many occasions I didn’t care if I slept under the stars because I was free and happy to think and walk the streets without the oppression of the dictatorship.”

### ***Family Pain***

“Thousands of Chileans that were forced to live in exile suffered from a distance by not being with their loved ones. Being away from your family means that you are not part of their daily lives or their celebrations. The violence of the dictatorship annihilated the family circle from a large percentage of the Chilean population.”

### ***Working in solidarity***

“A lot of people think that going away on exile meant that we forgot about Chile, and that is not true. Our exile was not a golden exile. These were *not* people that lived apart from what happened in Chile. We lived, we felt and we fought from different trenches and participated in the liberation of the Chilean people.”

## **DIRECTOR/PRODUCER BIOGRAPHY**

### **ALISSON LARREA**

Alisson Larrea is a Canadian, born in Ecuador, who holds a MBA and an undergraduate degree of Applied Arts in Radio and Television Production. Alisson has worked in film and television for over 10 years, producing and directing educational, promotional and corporate videos as well as short documentaries and films shot in Canada and Latin America. She was nominated as Best Communicator at the - Latin American Achievement Awards in 2002 in Toronto.

Alisson's strong commitment to promote her culture in Canada and help Hispanics better integrate to this society made her create several organization and events to promote the role of Hispanics in Canadian mainstream society.

Alisson combined this passion for her community with her passion for documentaries and decided to produce and direct her first feature length documentary "Memories of a Dreamer" –a film that showcases the journey of a political prisoner from Chile, his struggle as an exile and determination to overcome those obstacles to make his dreams come true.

Parallel to television, Alisson had developed a successful marketing career working in major Canadian organizations and creating her own marketing consultant firm.

## **CREDITS**

### **Producer/Director**

Alisson Larrea

### **Editor**

Julia Blua

### **Unit B Director/ Main DOP**

Felipe Rodriguez

### **Music Composer**

Louis Vautour

### **DOPs**

Felipe Rodriguez - Canada

Alejandro Pereira - Chile

Walter Pacifico - Canada