



A STOLEN MOVIE

UNA PELICULA ROBADA

POR
CAMILO RESTREPO



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«I am only concerned with what is not mine»
Cannibalist Manifesto. 1928. Oswald de Andrade.

Synopsis

I wanted to make a movie, but I didn't have the money to do it. So, I decided to steal one that already existed. It was shot in the country where I was born, Colombia, and it's a really great film.

Director's Note, Camilo Restrepo

I conceived *A Stolen Movie* against a backdrop of uncertainty and exasperation. I was worried about finding the money not only to produce new films, but also to cover the costs of everyday life. I sold my camera to buy myself some time until I could find a stable job. My professional future looked bleak, at a time when everything in the world looked bleak. The international community's lacklustre response to the US operation in Venezuela filled me with exasperation that grew with every threat from the US government to invade other Latin American countries, including Colombia, the country where I was born. In the case of Colombia, the prospect of a military invasion gave way to a US strategy to influence the presidential elections, tipping the balance in favour of a candidate who was openly subservient to Washington's interests. Like millions of Colombians, I wanted to protest. I thought about making a protest film that would stand out from the hubbub of videos flooding social media. But what budget would I have to produce it? What camera would I use?

One evening, without giving it a second thought, I picked up a notebook and started writing the script for *A Stolen Movie* as if I were writing a letter to my mother. I started with the simplest idea in the world: to tell her that, if the current US government had decided to take control of our country's destiny, I would take something from them by force in retaliation. 'Yes, Mum, I'm going to become a thief.' The idea of stealing a film came to me straight away. And not just any film, but one I knew well because I'd already been taking images from it for years, as it perfectly illustrates the expansionist doctrine of the United States towards the countries of the southern part of the continent, which are regarded as the backyard of the northern power.'

The stolen film, *Daring the Darien*, tells the story of a road trip along the main route through the United States' 'backyard': the Pan-American Highway. This road has remained unfinished for decades, as it is impossible to build through a jungle section known as the 'Darien Gap', which marks the border between Colombia and Panama. *Daring the Darien* was filmed in 1961 to promote General Motors' Chevrolet Corvair cars. It was the sequel to the 1960 film *From Here to There*, which covered the initial leg of the journey, from Chicago to Panama.

As I mentioned, I had already used footage from *Daring the Darien*. That was back in 2011, when I first picked up a camera with the aim of making a film, *Tropic Pocket*, which was shot in a hurry in the Darien. I ended up mixing my footage with archive material shot in the same region, most of which bears witness to the tenacity with which various missions serving religious, ideological and economic interests have never ceased to plunder and destroy the jungle. Evangelical missions, military troops, cattle ranchers, exotic timber loggers and foreign companies, which for decades have treated the inhabitants of the Darién as savages who must be converted to the Christian faith and driven either into labour or into armed struggle.

I often find myself reflecting on these archive images in the light of current events in the region. Recently, in 2021, there was a great deal of talk about the Darien due to Venezuelans crossing the forest on foot to escape the harsh living conditions in their country. And now, following the victory of the US-backed candidate in Colombia's presidential election, with a programme that encourages deforestation, the promises made during his campaign herald a new chapter for the Darien. We can expect to see new machinery arriving along the roads from the north.

Technical Information

Original title: Una película robada
International title: A Stolen Movie
French title: Un Film volé
Concept: Camilo Restrepo

Mixing engineer: Táriq Burney
Mixing studio: Imán Music, Bogotá, Colombia
Studio coordination: Nicolás Muñoz M.

Producer and filmmaker: Camilo Restrepo
Running time: 11 minutes
Country of production: Colombia
Year of production: 2026



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