

BONES of CONTENTION

*A feature documentary film
by Andrea Weiss*

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Synopsis

Bones of Contention is the first nonfiction feature film to explore the theme of historical memory in Spain, focusing on the repression of lesbians and gays under *Franquismo*. Lining the roads of Spain, masked by miles and miles of pine trees, are unmarked graves in which over a hundred twenty thousand victims of the Franco regime are buried. Today the families of the *desaparecidos* lead a grassroots effort to uncover and identify the bones of their loved ones, despite opposition from the Spanish government.

Invisible to the eye but hyper-visible in the mind, these mass graves of Spain's missing persons are an apt metaphor for the historical memory conundrum. How does a country excavate a past that is actively suppressed?

The film weaves together two strands, the historical memory movement's campaign to uncover the past, and the search for the hidden lives of lesbians and gays under Franco. These strands are connected through the figure of Spain's most famous poet, Federico García Lorca, who was killed by a right-wing firing squad in the first few weeks of the Spanish Civil War. The mystery of his missing remains and the debates over their significance provide the narrative spine of the documentary, as he has become the symbol today for both the historical memory movement and the LGBT movement.

The film features interviews with:

Laura García Lorca, President, *García Lorca Foundation*
Emilio Silva, Founder, *Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica*
Antoni Ruiz and Silvia Reyes, imprisoned by the Franco regime due to their sexuality
Isabel Franc and Empar Pineda, lesbian witnesses and activists
Fernando Valverde, poet and Lorca scholar

Director's Statement

When I was living in Barcelona in 2011-12, I often walked its ancient streets. One evening I stumbled upon a political demonstration in the Plaza Sant Jaume, the crowd clamoring for “historical memory”. Moved by the dedication of the participants and even just the melodic phrase “la memoria histórica,” I was driven to explore this subject further. As a lifelong historian, first by natural inclination and later by formal education, I have always bemoaned the lack of interest on the part of my own country in examining its past. The United States is so future-oriented, quite convenient for a country intent on avoiding an investigation of our role in slavery, Vietnam, and so many other atrocities. I was surprised by the presence of these demonstrators, and impressed that in a time of rising college tuition costs, labor strikes, and massive unemployment in Spain, what happened 75 years ago still is considered urgent.

Because of my sense that LGBT history can serve as a site of resistance against official narratives, the film had to go beyond the historical memory movement's fight to gain some sort of justice for the disappeared. I also needed to learn what happened to the LGBT community under Franco, and place that story firmly in the context of the larger human rights struggle. This film brings together my love for the work of Federico García Lorca, my decades-long commitment to uncovering forgotten or erased corners of LGBT history, and the deep affinity I feel with Spain, as I have come to consider Barcelona my second home. I am honored that the people who appear in my film have trusted me with their stories, especially on a topic that is still so difficult and painful to discuss within Spain.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

Andrea Weiss (Writer, Director, Producer, Editor)

Andrea Weiss is a documentary filmmaker and nonfiction author. She is the co-writer/director of the feature documentary *Escape To Life: The Erika and Klaus Mann Story*, which premiered in the Berlin and Rotterdam Film Festivals. Her other film credits include *Recall Florida*, *I Live At Ground Zero*, *Seed Of Sarah*, *Paris Was A Woman*, *A Bit Of Scarlet*, *UN Fever*, *Before Stonewall* (for which she won an Emmy Award), *Tiny & Ruby: Hell Divin' Women* and *International Sweethearts Of Rhythm* which premiered in the New York Film Festival.

Weiss has been awarded fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, and New York Foundation for the Arts as well as a Fulbright Fellowship to Spain to produce her latest film, *Bones of Contention*. She holds a Ph.D. in History, and directs the MFA Program in Film at the City College of New York.

Carmen Vidal Balanzat (Director of Photography)

Carmen Vidal is a Spanish writer, director and director of photography. She is the recipient of a Student Academy Award® (Oscar) and six NY Emmy® Awards. Her work has been exhibited at the United Nations, ARTE TV, PBS, the Museum of Modern Art. As a director of photography, Carmen has specialized in documentary films, including *Of Kites and Borders* (Dir. Yolanda Pividal, Winner of Best Documentary at the San Diego Film Festival, 2013), *Sloan at 75* (Dir. Lisa Beth Kovetz, 2011, winner of a Communicator Award), *U.N. Fever* (Dir. Andrea Weiss, 2007) and *Silences* (Dir. Octavio Warnock-Graham, 2006, winner of three College Emmy Awards).

Pamela Ralat (Editor)

Pamela Ralat is a documentary film and video editor based in New York. She has worked on pieces for PBS, Univision Television, Telemundo, The Weather Channel, Investigative Discovery and Forbes Magazine. Some recent editing credits include: *Hans Richter: Everything Turns, Everything Revolves* (dir. Dave Davidson), *Rescoring Richter* (dir. Dave Davidson), *A Gesture and A Word* (dir. Dave Davidson). Pamela is currently editing a series of videos that will be part of the major exhibition "Unpacking The Archive: Frank Lloyd Wright at 150" opening June 2017 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Miguel Ángel Muñoz (Narrator)

Miguel Ángel Muñoz felt drawn to acting very early on. At just 10 years old he made his film debut in *The Lame Pigeon* by Jaime de Armiñan (director of *My Dearest Señorita*, nominated for an Academy Award as Best Foreign Film). Since then, he has worked in Europe and the U.S. with directors such as Javier Fesser, Academy Award nominee for Best Live Action Short for *Binta and the Great Idea*; and alongside Brazilian director Andrucha Waddington in *Lope*, earning 2 Goya Awards. He has also worked with director Klaus Menzel in his film *What About Love*, in which he starred with Sharon Stone and Andy García. In over 22 years, Muñoz has always made an effort to further develop his craft. He trained with Juan Carlos Corazza in Madrid and studied at the Lee Strasberg Theater and Film Institute in Los Angeles.

CAST

Featuring in order of appearance:

Laura García Lorca is the president of the García Lorca Foundation and niece of Federico García Lorca.

Emilio Silva is a Spanish journalist and the founder of The Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory.

Antoni Ruiz is president of The Association of Ex-Social Convicts, an organization in Spain trying to gain recognition for those, like himself, who were imprisoned under Franco on account of their sexuality.

Isabel Franc is a prize-winning Spanish author and graphic novelist who grew up under Franco and speaks about lesbian oppression under his regime.

Empar Pineda is a Spanish lesbian feminist activist. She has written numerous articles for the Spanish newspaper *El País* on the topic of feminism in Spain.

Fernando Valverde is a Grammy award-winning poet and Lorca scholar. He is considered one of Spain's most important living poets.

Silvia Reyes is a Cabaret Artist. She was arrested and imprisoned under Franco numerous times for being a transwoman.

Miguel Caballero is a local historian based in Granada. He is the author of *García Lorca's Final Thirteen Hours*.

CREDITS

Written, Produced, and Directed by
Andrea Weiss

Narrated by
Miguel Ángel Muñoz

Director of Photography
Carmen Vidal Balanzat

Additional Camera
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Greta Schiller (Barcelona)

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Sound mix

Paul Hill

Color Correction & On-line Edit

Mike Olenick

Post-Production Audio Mix and On-line Services provided by
Film/Video Studio Program, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus Ohio

Music

Al Alba

composed and performed by Luis Eduardo Aute Gutierrez
courtesy of Universal Music Publishing MGB Spain (incomplete)

El Café de Chinitas

composed by Federico García Lorca
performed Enrique Montoya y Su Cuadro Flamenco

Por Granaínas

composed by Federico García Lorca
performed by Niño Ricardo & The Spanish Guitar

Zorongo Gitano

composed by Federico García Lorca
performed by Manuel Cano & The Spanish Guitar

Alba y El Paso De La Siguriya De Poema Del Cante Jondo

composed by Federico García Lorca
performed by Germaine Montero & The Spanish Guitar

Homenaje a Navarra

composed by Joaquín Turina
performed by David Delgado and Stefan Schmidt (Duo DS)

Sonata Espanola II. Vivo

composed by Joaquín Turina
performed by David Delgado and Stefan Schmidt (Duo DS)

Op. 93 Las Musas de Andalucia

composed by Joaquín Turina
performed by David Delgado and Stefan Schmidt (Duo DS)

El Rosario en la Iglesia

composed by Joaquín Turina
performed by David Delgado and Stefan Schmidt (Duo DS)

Violin Sonata No. 1, Op. 51

composed by Joaquín Turina

performed by David Delgado and Stefan Schmidt (Duo DS)

La Cancion del Lunar

composed by Joaquín Turina

performed by David Delgado and Stefan Schmidt (Duo DS)

Ante el Espejo

composed by Joaquín Turina

performed by David Delgado and Stefan Schmidt (Duo DS)

Alucinaciones

composed by Joaquín Turina

performed by David Delgado and Stefan Schmidt (Duo DS)

All music by Joaquín Turina is Courtesy of Gramola Records, the Duo DS and the heirs of Joaquín Turina

La Paloma

composed by Sebastian Iradier

performed by Billy Vaughn Orchestra

Himno de Riego

National Anthem of the La Segunda República Española

sung by members of la Plataforma Contra La Impunidad del Franquismo

Archive Sources

Alamy Photo Archive

Matilde Albarracín, private collection

Arxiu d'Imatges de l'Arxiu Municipal de l'Ajuntament de Granollers (Pere Cornellas i Aligué)

Arxiu Municipal de Barcelona

Arxiu Nacional de Catalunya

Asociación Ex-Presos Sociales, Valencia

Asociación Para La Recuperación De La Memoria Historica

Barcelona Municipal Archive

Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami Libraries, Coral Gables, Florida

Federico García Lorca Foundation

Institut del Teatre - Centre de Documentació i Museu de les Arts Escèniques (Anna Valls and Jordi Riera)

Memoria y sexualidad de las mujeres bajo el franquismo (Dirección: Raquel Osborne)

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia

National Archives and Records Administration, Motion Picture Division

National Library of Medicine/NIH

No-Do/RTVE, Spain

Skylight Pictures

Vanderbilt Television Archive

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Anayansi Díaz-Cortés

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Karma Gava

Stephanie Golob

Idelfonso Gomez

Mercedes González Domínguez

Peter Kinoy

Anjanette Levert

Manuel Mendoza

Silvia Mestres

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Cecilia Montagut Acosta

Raquel Osborne

Alba Parejo González

Quim Puig, *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*

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Victoria Ruiz

Robert Sanfiz, *La Nacional, NYC*

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Bones of Contention, A Film by Andrea Weiss
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Greta Schiller for Jezebel Productions, Inc.
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PRESS KIT IMAGES

Please find links to downloadable press-approved images, including captions.

1. Antoni Ruiz (center), imprisoned for being gay, partying with friends in the post-Franco era.

<http://tinyurl.com/antoniR>

2. Weekly demonstration in Madrid calling for “historical memory”. “Without memory, there is no democracy!” – demonstration chant

<http://tinyurl.com/demomadrid>

3. Emilio Silva, founder of the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory, at Almudena Cemetery in Madrid, where firing squads killed hundreds of anti-fascist youth in the final days of the Spanish Civil War.

<http://tinyurl.com/zb5qqo9>

4. Feminist activist Empar Pineda (second from right), at a LGBT Pride March in Barcelona with Barcelona’s Mayor, Ada Colau (woman on left).

<http://tinyurl.com/zxanlfx>

5. Uncovered remains of one of the hundred twenty thousand Desaparecidos. “If you don’t see the corpse, you always have doubt.” – Emilio Silva

<http://tinyurl.com/shot-boots>

6. A fight breaks out at the weekly vigil in Madrid over whether to remember or forget the past.

<http://tinyurl.com/solvigil>

7. Lesbian author Isabel Franc and LGBT activist Antoni Ruiz recall LGBT oppression and survival strategies during the Franco era. “The men were all imprisoned, and the women didn’t exist.” – Isabel Franc

<http://tinyurl.com/zugw55d>

8. Laura García Lorca, President of the La Fundación García Lorca and niece of the poet, on the terrace of Lorca’s bedroom in the family home in Granada, now a museum.

<http://tinyurl.com/lglhouse>

9. Spain’s most famous missing person, Federico García Lorca, has become a symbol for the historical memory movement.

<http://tinyurl.com/fglstatue>

10. Lorca surrounded by young men, 1930. “He lived his sexuality with a lot of freedom, of course freedom within what a conservative society is.” – Laura García Lorca

<http://tinyurl.com/fglwfriends>

11. Trans marchers at the first LGBT Pride march in Barcelona, 1977. Silvia Reyes, interviewed the film, can be seen on the far left.

<http://tinyurl.com/1977-gay-pride-BCN>

12. Image of Silvia Reyes arrest record.

<http://tinyurl.com/Silvia-reyesarrest>