

HAVANA COYOTES



A FILM
BY

BENJAMIN ORIFICI

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LOGLINE

During a military attack on Havana, “Operation Coyote,” a Cuban-American unravels her family history and discovers unexpected romance and a newfound love of her forbidden country.

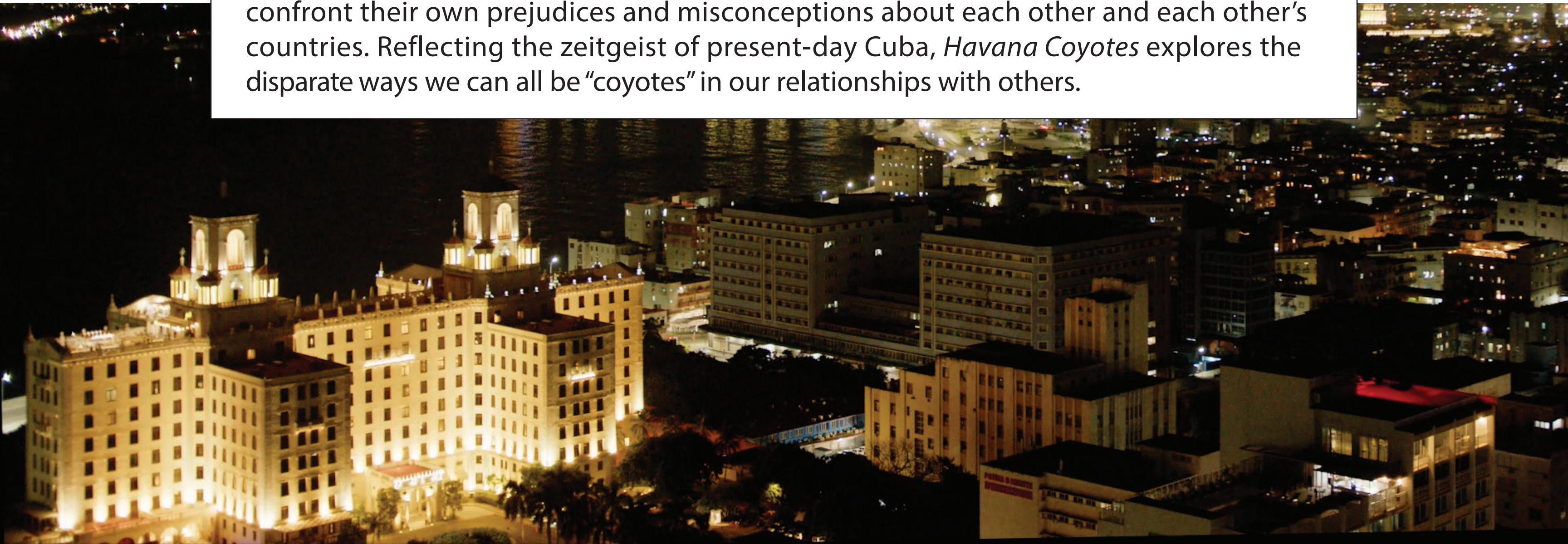
BASICS

TITLE:	<i>Havana Coyotes</i>
FORMAT:	Feature Film
RUNNING TIME:	1 hour 19 minutes
GENRE:	Drama, Romance, Cross-Cultural, Political
BUDGET:	\$125,000
LOCATIONS:	Havana, Cuba



SYNOPSIS

Julia, a Cuban-American, visits Cuba for the first time to collect the ashes of her recently-deceased grandmother. While there, she meets three Cuban contemporaries, Olivia, Carlos and Miguel, and comes face-to-face with the life she could have lived had her father not been sent as a boy to Miami during “Operation Peter Pan.” While sheltering in place during an unprovoked military attack on Havana, “Operation Coyote,” the four are forced to confront their own prejudices and misconceptions about each other and each other’s countries. Reflecting the zeitgeist of present-day Cuba, *Havana Coyotes* explores the disparate ways we can all be “coyotes” in our relationships with others.



CAST



Juannalise Ricardo



Mayra Mazorra



Roberto Romero



Georbis Martínez

Havana Coyotes is the first American film shot in Cuba with an all-Cuban cast since the 1959 Revolution. A narrative feature, *Coyotes*, explores the prejudices, misconceptions, and deep love of country that persist to this day between the US and Cuba.



Annabel Novo

CREDITS

Written & Directed by:

Benjamin Orifici

Story by:

**Benjamin Orifici
Luis Abel Oliveros**

Produced by:

**Wendell Laurent
Barney Oldfield
Benjamin Orifici**

Cinematography:

Benjamin Orifici

Editing:

Benjamin Orifici

Production Design:

Josefina Atokad

Production Management:

Ana Gloria

First Assistant Director:

Wendell Laurent

Sound Editing & Design:

Ivan Markovsky

Visual Effects:

Alex Duque

Post-Production Coordinator:

Emedio Di Stefano

Casting:

Luis Abel Oliveros





BENJAMIN ORIFICI

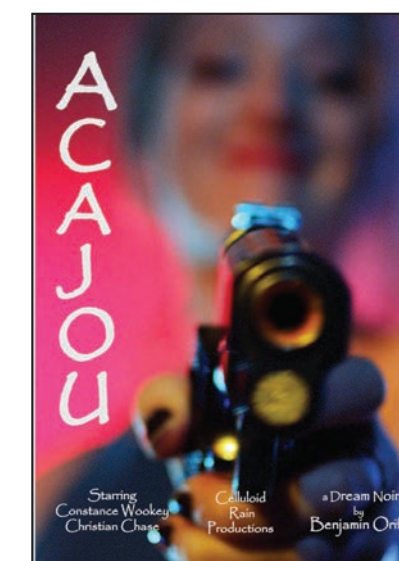
Writer/Director/Producer

Benjamin Orifici is an award-winning filmmaker whose features and shorts have screened in festivals around the world.

His cinematic exploration aims to challenge viewers' expectations by crafting unique visual and emotional landscapes to better understand current social issues.

He holds an M.F.A. in film directing from the Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema in New York City and is a member of the Board of Advisors for the renowned Anthology Film Archives in Manhattan. Through the years, he has maintained strong connections to Cuba as an Advisory Board member of the NYC cultural foundation, American Friends of the Ludwig Foundation of Cuba (AFLFC). He is co-founder of the film production company, Celluloid Rain Productions, based in New York and Paris. Benjamin relocated to the Miami region with his family during the pandemic and teaches film production at Lynn University.

OTHER WORKS BY BENJAMIN ORIFICI



“Throughout my career, I’ve adhered to the concept of what I call ‘Film Terroir,’ meaning my films are intimate, personal and exhibit the characteristic flavor and tone of the region in which they’re filmed. Place, is very important to me and plays prominently in my work. Artisanal is another word that interests me—meaning handcrafted, without mechanization. Through it all, my goal remains constant: I strive to challenge viewers’ expectations by crafting unique visual and emotional landscapes to better understand a region in particular, and, the world at large.”

—Benjamin Orifici



LUIS ABEL OLIVEROS

Writer/Casting Director

Luis Abel Oliveros is a Cuban writer and director. He is a graduate of the Universidad de las Artes (ISA), Cuba, with a degree in audiovisual communications.

For the past 14 years he has worked as a screenwriter and director at the Cuban public television station, Habana Canal, IRCT. Luis is also a teacher and coordinator of TV and New Media at the Escuela Internacional de Cine y TV, San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba.

Luis has directed and, in several cases, written documentaries including ***CorAlina***, ***The Fourth Villa***, ***María*** and ***Degree of Protection II***.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I believe that *Havana Coyotes* captures the zeitgeist of today's Cuba—the trials and tribulations of present-day Habaneros trying to make their way in a perpetually-sanctioned, post-pandemic, terrorist-labelled economy. This is a love story that exposes the current social and political truths while, at the same time, reveals the pride and love of country.



In private screenings in Havana, I heard the same refrain: “We’ve never seen this in any films; this is what’s going on right now in Cuba.” My Cuban co-writer and I worked for over a year on this script; through many false starts, we finally hit upon a vital story that could be executed clandestinely with the resources available. No actor was ever filmed on state-owned property. (cont. ➡)

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT (continued)



To enter Cuba incognito in May 2024, we brought all our equipment into the country in suitcases. Several of us were detained for hours. We encountered storms, daily electricity blackouts, and intense heat. The all-Cuban cast and Cuban support staff worked so hard to make this film a reality—even in the face of intrinsic danger to their own liberty.

I started visiting Cuba in 2015 as a member of a New York cultural foundation. And I am still in awe of this place, so full of passion, music, rhythm—amid such economic calamity. When I look back, the seeds of *Havana Coyotes* took root during that first trip. Ten years later, it has finally emerged—fully grown—and ready to spread its seeds to viewers who have but a glancing stereotype of this rich and wondrous country.





WENDELL LAURENT

Producer/1st Asst. Dir.

Wendell Laurent is an actor, writer and producer based in New York. He wrote, co-produced and starred in the multi-award-winning short film **Daybreak** and made his feature film debut as

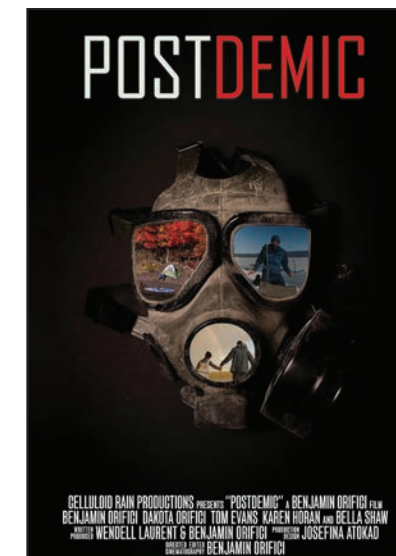
the lead in **An Extraordinary Affair**, written and directed by Benjamin Orifici. Wendell also co-wrote and co-produced with Benjamin Orifici the award-winning short film **PostDemic**.

Currently on the film festival circuit is the psychological short **The Final Walk** which Wendell wrote, produced and acted in with Beatrice Boepple and Glenn McBride, Jr.

Born and raised in New Orleans, Wendell earned a double BA in Theatre and Communications from Loyola University. After moving to New York, he co-founded Reckless Theatre Company and served as Producing Director for and acted in four Off-Broadway productions.

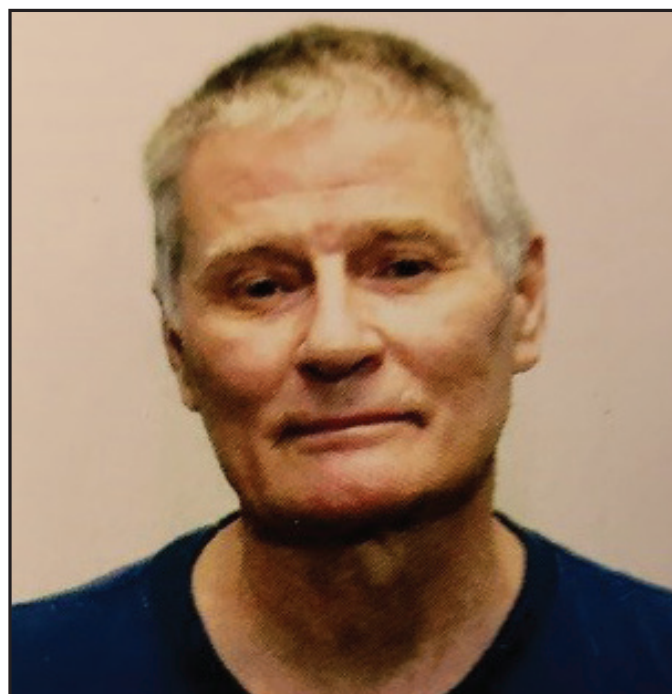
Wendell is currently developing a comedy short entitled the **The Dumbletons**, which he plans to direct, and the feature film version of **Daybreak**.

OTHER WORKS BY WENDELL LAURENT



“While doing research for another film project, including interviewing friends whose families were also Cuban ex-pats, I fell in love with Cuba, its culture and music. When presented with the prospect of working on a feature film that would be shot in Cuba, I jumped at the chance. I never in my wildest dreams ever thought I would visit this remarkable island or meet some of its beautiful people. Just as the United States is more than just its government, so too is Cuba. I am excited to be a part of a film that will hopefully help to bridge the divide between the misconceptions about our two countries and the reality.”

—Wendell Laurent

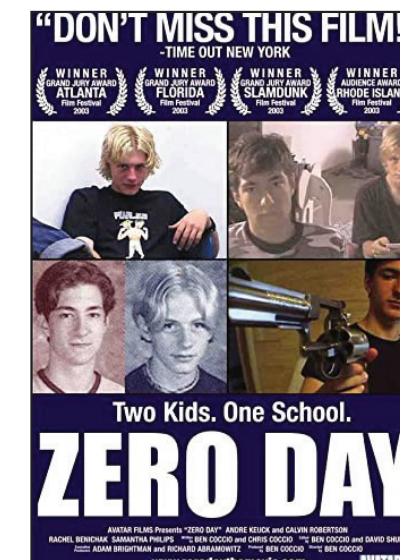
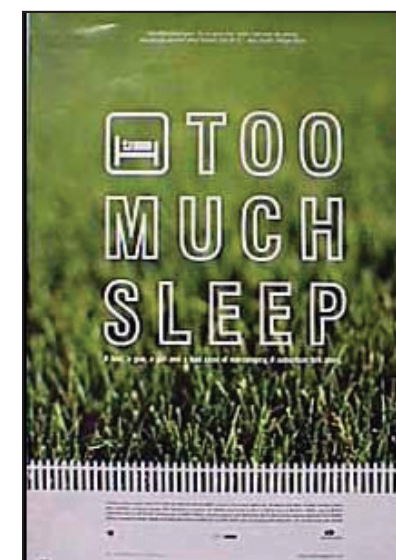


BARNEY OLDFIELD
Producer

Since 1998 Barney Oldfield has been General Manager of Angelika Entertainment Corporation where he produced the popular ***Too Much Sleep*** feature, nominated for the Independent Spirit Award, and the controversial ***Zero Day*** feature. In addition to successful film projects Barney developed and produced the MetroAngelika series and popular television & Internet programming for Cablevision and other clients.

In 2009 Barney executive produced two Internet-branded series. ***Easy to Assemble*** with Ileana Douglas and Jeff Goldblum was sponsored by IKEA; and ***Ctrl*** on NBC with Tony Hale and Steve Howey, by Nestea. He returned to film with the features ***Fairfield*** and ***Grinder***. He is currently producing a series of alternative market films for online distribution.

OTHER WORKS BY BARNEY OLDFIELD



CAST



ROBERTO ROMERO *as* Carlos

Roberto Romero is a Cuban actor with extensive experience in the world of theater and audiovisual arts. He graduated with honors from the National School of Theater and the Higher Institute of Arts in Havana. He is also an actor with the International Film School of San Antonio de los Baños (EICTV) and has been a lead actor with the theater companies “El Público,” “Teatro de la Luna,” “La Montaña,” and “La Perla Teatro.” Roberto can currently be seen as Ramses in the TV series ***Renacer***.



MAYRA MAZORRA PÉREZ *as* Pucha

Mayra Mazorra Pérez is a prolific theater, film, and television actress. A graduate of the National School of Arts and the Higher Institute of Arts, she has worked with the most prestigious theater companies in Cuba. She has also appeared on television in soap operas and series, as well as in national and international films such as ***El Beny, Ciudad en Rojo, Paraíso, La Isla de la Guayaba*** and ***Taxiboll***. She has received acting awards in both theater and television.

JUANNALISE RICARDO *as* Olivia

Juannalise Ricardo is a Cuban actress with a long career in the world of theater and audio-visual arts. She graduated with honors from the School of Dramatic Arts in Santiago de Cuba. She has been an actress at the International Film School of San Antonio de los Baños (EICTV) for seven years, where she has also trained in the Sanford Meisner technique in acting. She is the lead actress in the theater company, "La Montaña." She has also worked with other companies such as "Gaviota" and "Hubert de Blanc." ***Mancha, La Pecera, Cuentos de un día y mas*** and ***El Camino*** are some of the short films and movies she has worked on.



ANNABEL NOVO *as* Julia

Annabel Novo graduated from the Cuban National School of Arts (ENA) in 2019 as an actress and from the Higher Institute of Arts (ISA) in 2023 as a director of photography. She has a short but rich experience as an actress in cinema, theatre and television. Some of her most memorable characters are: Nara (from the eponymous movie directed by Rosa Maria Rodriguez Pupo), Maria (from the TV Show ***Calendar*** directed by Magda González Grau), Beba (from the Cuban play ***The Night of the Murderers*** directed by Arianna Delgado) and Don Liborio (from the Cuban play ***The Golden Cow*** directed by Rei Castaneda).



GEORBIS MARTINEZ *as* Miguel

Georbis Martinez graduated from the National School of Arts of Cuba, specializing in acting. He began his work in the national company Teatro El Público, while debuting in film and television. In a few years he became one of the most prolific actors of his generation in the eyes of Cuban critics and audiences. ***Animal, Yuli, Perfecto amor equivocado, Tres veces dos, El viajero inmóvil, Aída*** and ***Encounters*** are some of his works in cinema and television. His acting performances have earned him awards in Cuba and Spain, where he has lived since 2008.





BEHIND THE SCENES





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Click below to watch the HAVANA COYOTES trailer:

<https://vimeo.com/1074530265>



CONTACT US

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