

# It isn't everybody who has a really good plan

Starring Viggo Mortensen, *Todos tenemos un plan* fails to honour its premise

Sofía Gala Castiglione and Viggo Mortensen in *Todos tenemos un plan*.

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## FILM REVIEW

Had it been a Patricia Highsmith mystery — obviously, René Clément's 1960 adaptation of *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, entitled *Plein Soleil / Purple Noon* in its film version — the new Argentine/Spanish/German co-production *Todos tenemos un plan* would have stood a chance of cutting through the weeds and reeds so abundant in the swampy waters of the Delta del Tigre, where most of the action takes place.

It being an opera prima scripted by the director herself (Ana Piterbarg), *Todos tenemos un plan*, which ought to play heavily on the side of duplicity games, falls short of the mark and barely manages to meet the requirements of a moody, noirish thriller. Originality is not what director/screenwriter Piterbarg had in mind when developing her own plan — her movie's plotline boils down to the used and abused classical game of opposites embodied by a pair of twins with highly dissimilar lifestyles and intentions. There is no much variation either in the way the story develops, unfolding as an old-fashioned intrigue involving identity theft and a carefully laid out plan gone awry.

But one of the scattered favourable points in Piterbarg's *Todos tenemos un plan* is that none of the siblings is strictly good or bad. One of the twins, the more respectable one, is Agustín, a prestigious pediatrician with a successful and professionally rewarding practice, and married to the beautiful and well-grounded Claudia (Soledad Villamil). Of the two, it's Claudia who throws things off balance when she convinces the reluctant Agustín to start the complex process of child adoption. With only a few bureaucratic procedures to complete before they can become a happy family, the good doctor suffers a panic attack and turns tables on Claudia.

Dr. Agustín has decided he does not want to, even dreads the thought of parenting a child. Claudia, strong-willed and full of determination like any would-be mother — biological or not — decides to carry on with her own plan. If adoption means the end of

her marriage, so be it — she'll bring up the baby on her own, sell the apartment and make a new start as a single mother.

Agustín frets and locks himself up in his study, refusing to go out for days on end in solitary, self-imposed confinement. Unable to talk her husband out of abandoning his silly plan, Claudia goes away on a short business trip, her mind set on starting anew after her return.

Agustín has no plan of his own, but opportunity comes a-callin' when Pedro, his estranged twin brother, shows up at his door, the human and visual opposite of Agustín's upper middle class standing. Pedro has had it rough for the last years, living in a solitary island in the Delta del Tigre, committing petty theft, walking in and out of jail, unable to strike a balance and surrounding himself with bad company, such as Adrián (Daniel Fanego).

A domestic accident during Pedro's stay at his brother's provides Agustín with the kind of identity-swap opportunity that strikes but once in a lifetime — yes, even in the case of twins. The catch: running away from scary parental duty and an apathetic domestic life will not be without consequence.

If the contention that everyone would like to cast the dice one more time holds true, *Todos tenemos un plan* ought to make for the ideal kind of getaway story with a morality twist almost everyone could readily identify with. As it stands, *Todos tenemos un plan* is neither a botched job nor an accomplished task. Standing in between character study and crime story with a social critique of an amoral society, *Todos tenemos un plan*, switching gears as it goes along its 120-minute runtime, veers off its stated premise and makes you wish you had planned it all better, with less hate, with more attention to detail and consequence.

Mortensen, light years away from his sterling performances in David Cronenberg's *A History of Violence* (2005) and *Eastern Promises* (2007), plays it as it lays, like growing a beard and putting on his dead brother's soiled garments, as though Agustín's surgeon hands could be easily traded in for the rough, rugged hands of a man performing hard manual labour in the Delta.

Actress Sofía Gala Castiglione, who plays tough girl Rosa (Agustín's new-found love interest) clearly stands to benefit from her appalling acting record with the likes of Eliseo Subiela (*El resultado del amor*, 2007) and Diego Rafecas (*Rodney*, 2008; *Paco*, 2009). Her roles in those three films were so ridiculous that her turn in *Todos tenemos un plan*, however unremarkable, comes across as a nice surprise, and hers eventually becomes the one and only character in the film with a neatly laid out plan for herself.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

*Todos tenemos un plan / Everybody Has A Plan*. Argentina/ Spain/ Germany, 2012. Written and directed by: Ana Piterbarg. Cinematography by: Lucio Bonelli. Edited by: Irene Blecua, Alejandro Lázaro. Music by: Federico Jusid, Lucio Godoy. With: Viggo Mortensen, Soledad Villamil, Sofía Gala Castiglione, Daniel Fanego, Javier Godino, Oscar Alegre. Produced by: Ars Magna Films, Castafiore Films, Haddock Films. Distributed by: Fox. NC16. Running time: 120 minutes.