



# The Clan

**Director:** Pablo Trapero  
**Country:** Argentina  
**Date:** 2015

*A review from The Daily Telegraph:*

Arquímides Puccio (Guillermo Francella) is the head of a very busy household. There's his adult son Alex (Peter Lanzani), a rugby player for the Argentinian national team and a bit of a local celebrity, Epifanía (Lili Popovich), his wife of many years, his three younger children, and probably also one or two members of the public, gagged and chained to an iron bed in the cellar.



The place and time is Buenos Aires in the early 1980s, in the dying days of the Galtieri dictatorship: lucrative jobs are in short supply, so Arquímides runs a kidnapping racket to pay the bills. It's not ideal, but at least he can work from home.

The Clan, the new film from Pablo Trapero, is based on a true story, although like GoodFellas and The Wolf of Wall Street, it's one whose ludicrous twists and stomach-lurching turns demand for it to be told in widescreen. Trapero's earlier films, which include the slow-roasted

female prison drama Lion's Den and the multi-tiered slum thriller White Elephant, have always been pulled off with a certain muscularity and verve – but there's such an irresistible, black-hearted swagger to his latest that Martin Scorsese would immediately recognise a kindred spirit.

Effortless tracking shots, spasms of sickening violence and a perfectly pitched jukebox soundtrack are all conspicuously and stylishly deployed, sometimes all at once: few recent films have made me grin more than I did while watching a genteel and unsuspecting victim make her way out of a restaurant, only to be bundled into a van around the corner to the strains of David Lee Roth's Just a Gigolo.

And laughter – of the agonised, squirm-in-your-seat kind – is the most logical response to the audacity of Arquímides' schemes and the nauseating pressure under which he puts Alex to assist in them, despite his son's nascent career as an international sportsman.

Western audiences may recognise Francella from the Oscar-winning Argentinian crime thriller The Secret in Their Eyes, but in his home country he's known first and foremost as a comic actor, and his ability to detonate a line of dialogue at precisely the right moment proves vital.

Arquímides's presence is sinister to the point of lizard-like – when he isn't hissing orders, he's peering out at the world through cold, dry eyes – while Lanzani's Alex, with his mop of hair, bushy sideburns and generally hapless demeanour, is his warm-blooded physical opposite.

In a bravura sequence, Trapero and his co-editor, Alejandro Carrillo Penovi, quickly cut



back and forth between Arquímedes masterminding a particularly unpleasant abduction and Alex spending an energetic few minutes with his girlfriend Monica (Stefania Koessl) in the back seat of a car, combining violence and sex into a delirious zoetrope whirl.

The idea that the entire Puccio family, children and all, are to some extent jointly culpable for Arquímedes' wrongdoing – they heard the screams, after all, and enjoyed the money – is intriguingly, if perhaps not entirely satisfyingly, poked and prodded. But for all his darkly muttered talk of filial loyalty, Arquímedes' own allegiances of course lie elsewhere, and are finally exposed in an audacious and memorable coda.

With *The Clan* following *Damián Szifron's Wild Tales*, it's possible that Argentinian cinema is having a moment on the world stage, and a better ambassador for it than this film you could hardly wish for.

*From: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/2016/09/15/the-clan-review-a-swaggering-blackhearted-true-crime-saga-worthy/>*