



OliveFilms

presents

Me, too

[Yo, también]

Written and directed by
Álvaro Pastor & Antonio Naharro

Runtime: 103 minutes

Country: Spain

Language: In Spanish with English Subtitles

Format: Color / Aspect Ratio: 1:85 : 1

Sound: Dolby Digital

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Synopsis

Thirty-four-year-old Daniel is the first European with Down syndrome to have graduated from university. He starts a social services job in Seville, where he meets free-spirited co-worker Laura. They become fast friends, drawing the attention of both their co-workers and families. Their unique relationship becomes problematic when Daniel falls in love with her. But these rebellious souls refuse to bend to the rules and they find friendship and love as they have never known.

The Directors

Álvaro Pastor. Born in Madrid, 1972. He studied screenwriting and film making under Miguel Picazo, and acting under Juan Carlos Corazza and Catalina Lladó. He also studied music at the Madrid Conservatory. He has worked in cinema, television and publicity as screenwriter and/or director, mostly on short features. He has directed and produced five shorts, among which his last one, *Invulnerable*, has won over 40 international awards. He has co-written scripts with Antonio Naharro for the past fourteen years. Together they have written five screenplays and co-directed the short feature *One more, one less*, for which they were nominated to the 2002 Goya Awards.

Antonio Naharro. Born in Albacete, Spain, 1968. He studied acting under Juan Carlos Corazza (Madrid) and Bernard Hiller (Los Angeles and Rome), William Layton, John Strasberg, etc. He is also a graduate of the Gestalt Therapy School in Madrid. Working in cinema, theatre and television, he garners most of his professional experience by means of short features, starting out as an actor and screenwriter and moving into production and direction with Álvaro Pastor on the short feature *One more, one less*, the winner of numerous awards and nominated to the 2002 Goya Award for Best Fictional Short Feature. In 2004, he stars in and co-produces the short *Invulnerable*, directed by Álvaro Pastor, and was awarded several acting prizes in international festivals (Alcala de Henares, Brest, Brussels, etc).

Me Too is the directors' first full-length feature film.

Directors' Statement

We first became acquainted with Pablo Pineda (Daniel) on television while we were in Seville. Antonio was living there and Álvaro was visiting to meet the *Danza Móvil Company* to prep a project with them. We had both considered examining intellectual disability and Down syndrome more thoroughly after making the short *One more, one less*.

When we first heard Pablo, we immediately knew that he was both unique and exactly like everyone else. We were moved by his evident loneliness. His position appeared to be that of a bridge that spanned two worlds as he seemed to be in two places at once: The world of intellectual disability and the so-called normal world. He was in no man's land. And that's how *Daniel*, Pablo's alter ego, came to be.

Down syndrome is characterized, among other things, by its difficulty to respect social rules. We thought that a woman of rebellious nature would be the ideal complement. Someone with a "down" nature to complement a man with Down syndrome strangely capable of adapting to norms. The character had to be able to bring out the expressiveness and spontaneity that Daniel carries within himself. As soon as we spoke to Lola Dueñas, we were pretty sure she had the essence of this role and, after a couple sessions, *Laura* came to be.

Our first step was to write the screenplay without really knowing Pablo. We let our intuition guide us and often spoke with Fernando Castets, our tutor in the Fundación Carolina Screenplay Workshop that we were attending at Casa de América. Our goal, at that point, was to create a fictional story around a character with Pablo Pineda's reality. Antonio's sister, Laura, has Down syndrome, but this case was different. We had never met anyone with Down syndrome who could express complex ideas in such a clear cut manner. Had he memorized what he had to say on TV? Was he really like he seemed to be? After finishing the second draft of the screenplay we decided to go to Malaga to meet him.

We came out of that first meeting convinced that there was a story to tell. Pablo surprised time and time again during that first conversation, and it deeply inspired us to keep on moving forward.

From the very first moment, there was a connection between us. Pablo liked the story and started working with us. There was much to investigate. Months later, after one of our visits to Malaga, we realized that he was the only one who could play this role. So, we asked him to.

We needed to carry out a test to make sure he would be capable of playing the role. In half an hour we knew we could do it. He was a natural, even though

we would need to rehearse a lot to avoid the acting clichés that he was used to. His intelligence, emotional openness and trust made it an easy job. The family's approval was essential. This subject is very important within the film. Families are very present in mentally challenged peoples' lives, just like in everybody's. We tried to create different types of families with diverse point of views so that the world surrounding our characters would be more realistic.

In this, oftentimes, reduced world, we wanted to include other characters with Down syndrome whose reality is more global than that of the main role. This is why we intended to work from the start with the Danza Móvil Company.

We met Koldo Zuazua, one of the film's producers, who had already shown his interest in our previous project, the short feature *Invulnerable*. He liked the project and took it to Alicia Produce, Julio Medem's production company, who showed great sensitivity concerning this venture.

The preparation period was long. There were many rehearsals, and numerous rewrites as we adapted the script according to what we discovered along the way. For us, selecting the actors and the technical crew was a very important process. It's also fair to say that, as directors, we are very satisfied by our choices. Choosing well makes everything easier.

We chose practically unknown actors to accompany the main roles and lend plausibility to the story. With Lola Dueñas, we created a complex character that could lend a twist to the story and could show us a "normal" person with a whole bunch of problems.

As regards the aesthetic and narrative line, together with Alfonso Postigo, the director of photography, we decided to go for a bare set design and film it with a shoulder camera and realistic lighting. Shooting with actors with Down syndrome requires that the crew pay special attention. They are quick to give what is needed in each scene, but the crew has to adapt and you have to know how to make yourself understood.

In the film there are two cities, Seville and Madrid; in the same way that there are two main roles and two worlds that cross and meet. Both characters undertake a journey which will shape their future. For Laura, it's a reunion with her past. For Daniel, it's the beginning of adult life.

CAST

Laura: Lola Dueñas

Daniel: Pablo Pineda

Santi (Daniel's brother): Antonio Naharro

M^a Ángeles (Daniel's mother): Isabel García Lorca

Bernabé (Daniel's father): Pedro Álvarez Ossorio

Consuelo: Consuelo Trujillo

Pedro: Daniel Parejo

Luisa: Lourdes Naharro

Pilar (Luisa's mother): Catalina Lladó

Reyes: María Bravo

Nuria (Laura's sister-in-law): Susana Monje

Pepe: Joaquín Perles

Rocío: Teresa Arbolí

Encarni: Ana Peregrina

Macarena: Ana De Los Riscos

Quique (Laura's brother): Ramiro Alonso

The Dance Company: Danza Móbile de Sevilla

CREW

Screenplay & Directors: Álvaro Pastor & Antonio Naharro

Produced by: Alicia Produce, Promico Imagen

Producers: Manuel Gómez Cardeña,
Julio Medem y Koldo Zuazua

Executive producers: Koldo Zuazua & Emilio González

Photography: Alfonso Postigo

Editor: Nino Martínez Sosa

Score: Guille Milkyway

Sound recording: Eva Valiño

Sound editing: Nacho Royo & Pelayo Gutiérrez

Art director: Inés Aparicio

Make-up & hair: Yolanda Piña

Wardrobe: Fernando García

Line producer: Verónica Díaz

1st A.D.: Carlos Gras