

## Memories of My Father

"Memories of My Father" (*El Olvido que Seremos*) is the second recent film about the heroics of an unassuming but dedicated professional in South America struggling against long odds to do the right thing in their troubled countries. In the just-released Argentine drama "Argentina-1985," it is the tough-minded attorney Julio Strassera (Ricardo Darin) who, with the help of a coterie of smart young lawyers, takes on the prosecution of vicious senior military commanders responsible for the slaughter of their own countrymen in the so-called "Dirty War."

Now, out of the miseries of a gorgeous Andean fallen city (Medellin, Colombia) comes a heartwarming—and heart-rending—true story of a prominent doctor and human rights activist who fights on behalf of his own distressed society and, especially, for his tight-knit family

Set in the violent, drug-ridden city of 1970's Medellín, Colombia (dubbed locally as the "City of Eternal Spring"), the narrative outlines the life of a university teaching physician, Héctor Abad Gómez (played by the Spanish actor Javier Cámara), a paterfamilias concerned about both his own children as well as children from less favored classes. Gómez is a thoughtful free-thinker who has "never kneeled down to anyone" and is occasionally brought down to earth by his more practical-minded wife Cecilia (Patricia Tamayo) and also kept sane and sensible by his lively daughter and his son, also named Héctor and nicknamed "Quinquin" (Nicolas Reyes Cano).

After a devastating loss in the family, Héctor Sr. decides to dedicate himself ever more intently to the greater cause of public health programs for the poor to the consternation of the city's autocratic authorities and paramilitary groups (who see him as a vile "comunista") and members of his own family, which comes under threat.

This is an intimate and complex story seen through the eyes of the father's only son, Héctor Abad Faciolince, one of the most outstanding writers in contemporary Colombia. Faciolince wrote of his family life in his book *Oblivion: A Memoir*, on which this screenplay—written by Daniel Trueba, the director's younger brother—is based.

Son Héctor tells his story over two distinct epochs: his curly-haired youth as Quinquin (shot in crisp color) and the years when he returns home from study in Italy (shot in vivid black-and-white) to reunite with the family. Though he still adores his father, the young man now frets about the fate of this man who so openly challenges the authorities and can seem more committed to his causes than to his own blood.

Academy Award-winning Spanish director Fernando Trueba, a veteran of the Spanish cinema, helmed the film. His Oscar (for Best Foreign Language film) came in 1992 for "Belle Époque," a film which earned him international attention. Trueba released "Memories" in 2021 at the Cannes Film Festival, and it has

taken its time to reach our shores—but it was worth the wait. It is a sensitive and touching document, humanizing a piece of Latin American history that is little known to Americans.

*(The film opens in the DC area on December 2nd, runs 136 minutes, and is not rated).*

(December 2022)