ZAPATISTA

FEATURE FILM | POLITICAL THRILLER / MYSTERY



Written by Frank Gaydos, based on the novel by P.W. Ross

Tagline: The past is never dead. It’s just waiting in the tunnels.

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A CITY BUILT ON QUARTZ AND BLOOD

THE SETTING: San Miguel de Allende, Central Mexico. A UNESCO World Heritage site and the birthplace of Mexican independence. 6,000 feet of elevation in the high desert.





THE ATMOSPHERE: Blinding light, deep shadows, and a history of rebellion. A town of charm on the surface, but built over a network of ancient tunnels.

THE SUBTEXT: Beneath the expat luxury lies the "House of Inquisitions" and the weight of centuries of colonialism.

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SILENCE IN THE AFTERNOON



THE INCITING INCIDENT

The crowd noise vanishes. In the center of the ring lies Raphael Valenzuela, a young matador and the hope for the sport's revival.

THE CRIME SCENE:

- Crucified on the sand. Arms outstretched, palms up.
- Pinned by two 25-inch banderillas (one green, one red).
- A bullfighter's sword (estoque) buried in his heart.

IMPLICATION: This is not a random murder. It is a staged, ritualistic execution.

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THE RELUCTANT WITNESS



JACK ALEXANDER (PROTAGONIST)

PROFILE: Wealthy Canadian ex-pat and former tech mogul. Lives in the historic "House of Inquisitions."

THE TRAUMA: Recovering from a harrowing ordeal tracking the 'Green Martyr' eco-terrorist in Canada. Diagnosed with PTSD, medicating with alcohol.

THE ROLE: Recruited by Police Chief Raul Hernandez not as a hero, but as a consultant. He understands the mind of a performative killer.

"I saw atrocities you wouldn't believe with the Green Martyr killer. I may stand corrected."
Courier Prime

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THE ARCHITECT OF VENGEANCE

JUAN CARLOS QUINTERO (ANTAGONIST)

- **THE BACKGROUND:** A former Zapatista from Chiapas and a brilliant academic historian. Left the movement when he felt it became too passive.
- **THE MOTIVATION:** A symbolic war to “awaken the soul of a betrayed Mexico.” He views violence as a necessary historical correction against colonialism and environmental destruction.
- **THE METHOD:** Highly educated in Pre-Columbian history. He uses the rituals of the Otomi and Chichimeca to turn his victims into symbols.
- **THE ALIAS:** Known to the police only as “Sicario”.

`Courier Prime`

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THE ODD SQUAD



RAUL HERNANDEZ
(The Local Law)

Police Chief.

YANNIS HOLLANDER
(The Forensic Historian)

Forensic Historian.

ELENA TORRES
(The Coroner)

Coroner.

FERNANDA ROMERO ("NANDA")

Indigenous Bridge.

NANCY PARKER
(The Relentless Reporter)

Relentless Reporter.

A motley crew of expats and locals providing the texture of the film—forensics, history, archaeology, and law. The story is told through their diverse perspectives.

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THE RITUALS OF THE PAST



THE MATADOR.
Crucifixion.
End of Spanish Sport.

SYMBOLISM



THE PRIEST.
Burned alive.
Zapata coins on eyes.
Punishment for Church sins.

COLONIAL OPPRESSION

PRE-COLUMBIAN RITUAL



THE MINER.
Heart excised with obsidian.
Reclamation of resources.

COLONIAL OPPRESSION



THE NEGOTIATOR.
NAFTA Architect.
Rejection of foreign trade.

ZAPATISTA INFLUENCE



THE AGENT.
GMO Executive.
Defense of indigenous agriculture.

ZAPATISTA INFLUENCE

PATTERN ANALYSIS:
All murders utilize specific Zapatista or Pre-Columbian symbolism targeting pillars of colonial/modern oppression.

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A WAR FOR THE SOUL OF MEXICO



THEME 1: COLONIALISM'S SHADOW
The killer uses the tools of the oppressed (obsidian, arrows) against the symbols of the oppressor (The Church, NAFTA, Mining).

THEME 2: ENVIRONMENTAL EXPLOITATION
A direct line is drawn between the 'Green Martyr' eco-terrorist in Canada and the Zapatista struggle in Chiapas. Violence as a reaction to mining and GMO encroachment.

THEME 3: JUSTICE VS REVENGE
Quintero is a murderer, but his historical grievances are accurate. The central moral ambiguity.

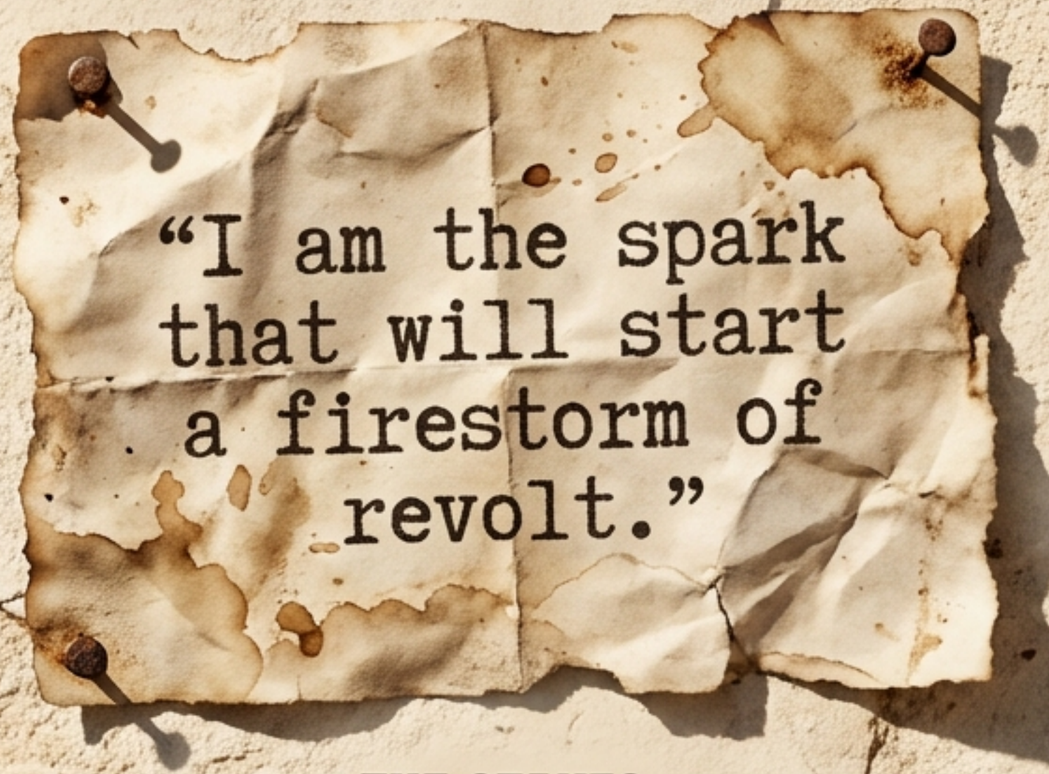
"We are nihilists, except that our nihilism is not intellectual but instinctive." — Octavio Paz

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THE MANIFESTO

THE ESCALATION

Nancy Parker receives a letter from the killer. He frames himself as an “avenging angel” comparable to the Green Martyr.



THE CONFLICT

Authorities want to suppress the news to protect tourism. The killer demands publication within 4 days or the killing continues.

THE STAKES

Jack is caught between protecting the investigation and managing a reporter willing to trade ethics for a Pulitzer.

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INTO THE TUNNELS



THE UNDERWORLD
The structural pivot of the film. We move from the sun-drenched streets to the literal tunnels beneath the city.

THE REVELATION
The killer isn't fleeing; he is living beneath them. The tunnel network dates back to the Cristero War, connecting the killer's safehouse to the church crypts.

THE ATMOSPHERE
Claustrophobia, dust, darkness, and the physical manifestation of the city's buried secrets.

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REVOLUTION DAY



THE CLIMAX

(Courier Prime)
Jack confronts Quintero on the bell tower ledge. Quintero reveals his mission is complete.

THE MARTYRDOM

(Courier Prime) Quintero, dressed in indigenous Lacandon tunic, leaps from the tower. He falls like a comet against the night sky, impaling himself on the iron spikes below.

THE IRONY

(Courier Prime)
The crowd cheers, mistaking the suicide for part of the Revolution Day show. “Viva Zapata!”

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THE VISUAL LANGUAGE



High Desert Bleach
Texture: blinding, sun-bleached, dust-and-sunlight.



Tunnel Vision
Texture: stone and midnight, & mineral texture.



Violence
Texture: corroded, flaky rusty metal texture.

CINEMATOGRAPHY
A study in extremes. The blinding light of day vs. the suffocating dark of the crypts.

PACING
Restrained. The violence is shocking but not gratuitous; filmed with the cold detachment of a ritual.

SOUND DESIGN
The thundering drums of Concheros dancers blending into the heartbeat of victims. The silence of the bullring. The juxtaposition of fireworks and gunshots.

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MARKET & COMPARABLES



Sicario
For the gritty depiction of the borderlands and moral ambiguity.



SE7EN
For the ritualistic, pattern-based investigation.



No Country for Old Men
For the relentless antagonist and high-desert noir.

GENRE: Elevated Political Thriller

TONE: Intelligent, Visceral, Atmospheric

AUDIENCE: Fans of filmmaker-driven thrillers that balance action with socio-political weight.

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THE CYCLE CONTINUES



THE CODA

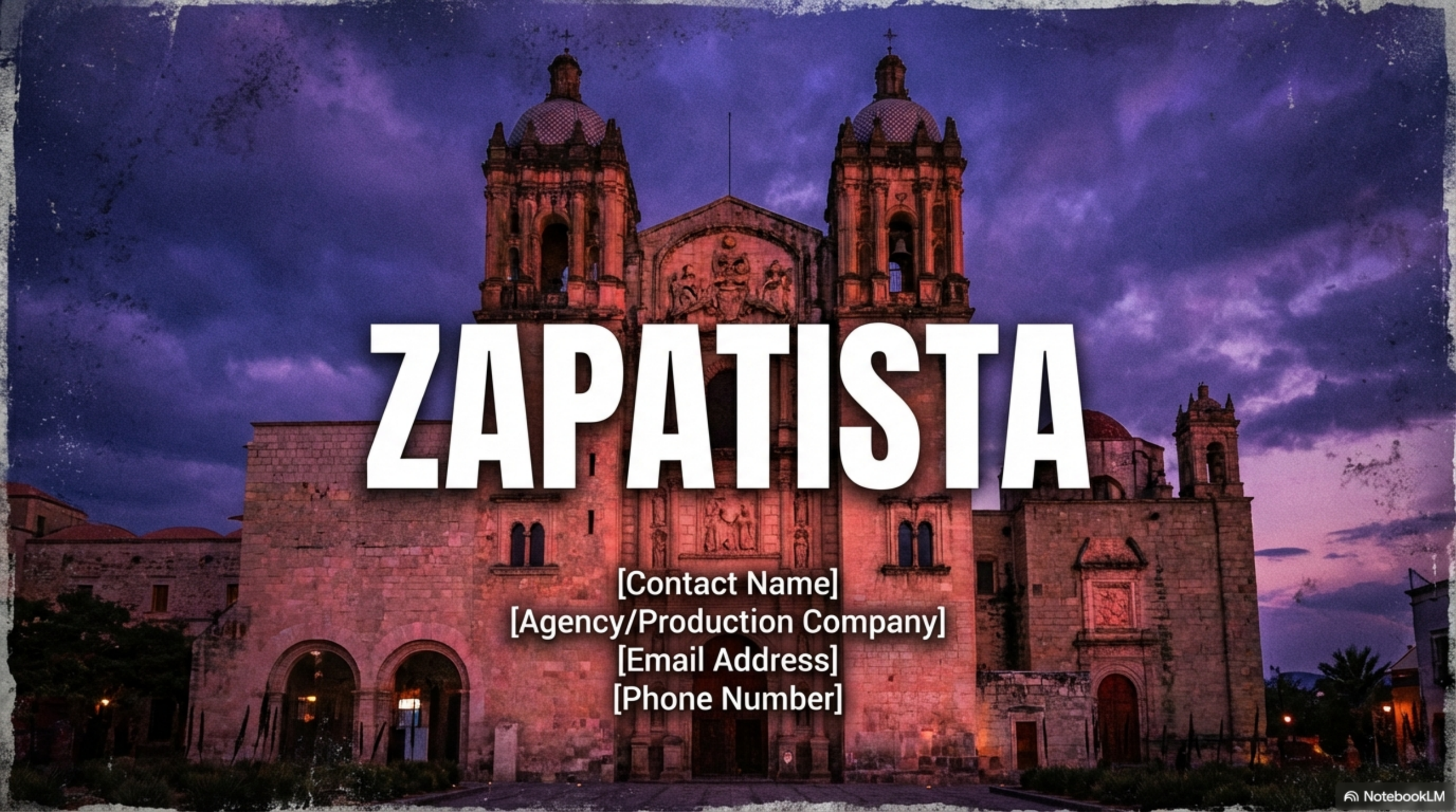
The story ends not with a clean victory, but with a question. The "Odd Squad" disbands. Jack is left with his demons.

DEEP IN THE JUNGLE

Armida is addressed as "Subcomandante." The Sicario is dead, but the movement—and the violence—persists.

Can violence ever truly heal history?

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[Contact Name]
[Agency/Production Company]
[Email Address]
[Phone Number]