

MARTÍNEZ DE HOZ

Short synopsis

The documentary has its origins in the judicial demand to ban the documentary *Awka Liwen* (Rebel Dawn) pursued by the grandsons of the civil chief of the last dictatorship in Argentina, José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz.

The attempt to explain this judicial aberration narrates and analyzes the economic history of the country via the counterpoint between what the Martínez de Hoz family says in their law suit and historical truth.

More detailed synopsis

Martínez de Hoz is the story of the legal suit to ban our most recent documentary, *Awka Liwen* on the basis of its alleged “damage to the honor of the Martínez de Hoz family,” in the plaintiffs’ own words in their law suit. This family was the largest landowners of the country, and its members participated actively in all of Argentina’s dictatorships (the grandfather of the plaintiffs is the recently deceased former Minister of the Economy and the civil chief of former General Videla). It is also the economic history of the country as it developed in the counterpoint between the story told by the Martínez de Hoz family both in their law suit for ban (with the goal of establishing a non-existent honor of the family besmirched by *Awka Liwen*) and historical truth. Thus, the documentary narrates the history of the Martínez de Hoz family and the creation of the National State—and, hence, its institutions—in terms of and for the benefit of the capital-producing oligarchy itself. It is also the history of the Judicial Branch, which, as the former President of the National Supreme Court Eugenio Zaffaroni said, in an interview conducted for this documentary, never collaborated so harmoniously with the Executive Branch as it did in the period of the “Argentine Oligarchy.” Finally, the documentary deconstructs the creation of the national world view (*Weltanschauung*)—that is, how the Argentines see themselves in relation to their peers and the dominant oligarchies that shaped them with the institutions the latter created for their own benefit (such as the Argentine educational system), how Argentines see themselves in relationship to the world, and how they see all other nations.

Full synopsis

One needs to know the great success of *Awka Liwen* to understand why this new documentary is necessary: the key to this new film is the law suit for the ban of our previous documentary being pursued by the Martínez de Hoz family and the Courtroom M of the National Civil Court, whose president, Matilde Díaz de Vivar, is a descendent of another of the oldest families of the Argentine oligarchy and a friend of the plaintiffs.

Awka Liwen premiered in September 2010 in the Cine Graumont in Buenos Aires. More than 3000 persons were present at the premier, and the film quickly assumed cult status. More than 10 million persons saw the documentary in film houses, schools, universities, unions, on television, at NGOs, in indigenous communities, through mass distribution in pirated format on the internet, street sales of pirated copies. Many parents baptized their children *Awka Liwen*, and a land takeover in Cipolletti was named after the film.

The documentary was incorporated into study programs in schools overseen by the National Ministry of Education, and it won five prizes at film festivals, having been nominated in more

than twenty-five, including the International Festival of Political Filmmaking (where it won First Prize) and the New York Film Festival/Latinbeat.

Martínez de Hoz is the story of the law suit for the banning of *Awka Liwen* which claims that it “besmirches the honor of the Martínez de Hoz family,” as the plaintiffs assert in their suit. This family was the principal landowner in the country, and its members participated actively in all of Argentina’s dictatorships (the grandfather is the recently deceased former Minister of the Economy and civil chief of the dictatorship of former General Videla). It is also the economic history of the country as it developed in the counterpoint between the history that the Martínez de Hoz family recounts in its suit for banning of the film (in order to assert a non-existent family honor besmirched by *Awka Liwen*) and historical fact.

Consequently, we will detail the history of the Martínez de Hoz family and the creation of the National Argentine State and, consequently, its institutions as they relate to and serve the capital-generating oligarchies themselves. It is, in turn, the story of the Judicial Branch, which as Supreme Court Judge Eugenio Zaffaroni himself has said (in an interview conducted for this documentary) it never functioned more harmoniously with the Executive Power than it did in the period of “Agroexporting Argentina.” Therefore, it is also the basic history of why it is necessary to democratize the only power of the State anchored in the century before the Sáenz Peña Law (the law affirming a universal secret vote), the 19th century. Finally, it is the story of the very creation of the Argentine world view (*Weltanschauung*) of how Argentines see themselves in relation to their peers and the dominant oligarchies that shape them through the institutions those oligarchies created for their own benefit (such as the Argentine education system), how Argentines see themselves in relation to the world, and how they see all other nations.

These multiple histories are told through the narrative of Osvaldo Bayer, one of the interviewees chosen for their being among the best and most renowned researchers on each one of the themes developed in the documentary and the archival material consulted. The story, whose central axis is the scandalous persecution of our persons with the goal of banning *Awka Liwen*, impinges on different disciplines and historical periods and nations, toward offering a profound and complex analysis of the central conflict that the work engages with. To this effect, along with Osvaldo Bayer as the central narrative figure, the film archive in which José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz, Sr. functions as a sort of antagonist to Osvaldo, the false Martínez de Hoz and the interviewees, knowledge and the interrelationship between the themes of the documentary give force to dramatic progression in the film, producing an exciting story.

Case number N 1408/2011 contains an exciting story that lays bare the rudimentary details and the fanciful thinking of one of the most emblematic families of the Argentine oligarchy. This story, composed by José Alfredo (grandson) and Alejandro Martínez de Hoz in the legal brief arguing for the banning of the film, so radically far-removed from what the immense majority of the populace live and believe, is the backdrop against which we deconstruct the decision en banque of Courtroom M of the National Civil Chamber to institute a Kafkaian judicial persecution against *Awka Liwen* and, in the process, to ignore the allegations of death threats against those being sued.

Storyline

Martínez de Hoz is a documentary feature film that was born out of the attempt by this family to ban the documentary *Awka Liwen* and the threats and acts of hostility toward one of its producers. This new work with Osvaldo Bayer is the economic history of Argentina, narrated on the basis of the counterpoint between the story as told by those pursuing the suit, the grandsons of the recently deceased economics minister of Videla in the judicial claim itself (in which various generations of the Martínez de Hoz family, beginning at the end of the XVIIIth century, appear as great forefathers who have benefitted the Nation) and true historic facts. It is consequently also the history of the Martínez de Hoz family itself, as one of the emblematic families, in the words of David Viñas, who were the owners of the land. For this reason, and pursuing a narrative structure that moves along several tracks and is in part circular, it is the story of the Argentine Judicial Branch as part of the construction of the cultural and institutional superstructure consonant with a nineteenth-century economic structure created by these old ruling oligarchies. It is also the story of the very creation of the Argentine world view (*Weltanschauung*), of how Argentines see themselves and their peers and the ruling oligarchies that shape them through the institutions they created for their own benefit, such as the Argentine educational system, how they see themselves in relation to the world, and how they see all other nations. Toward this end, Osvaldo and the most lucid minds of Argentina and Germany narrate and complex and profound story with an enormous profusion of archival material, original footage, and a highly creative stylistic liberty that also works as an aesthetic counterpoint that brings a breath of fresh air to the rigidity and one-dimensionality of the Kafkaian legal trial that we are undergoing. We are going to laugh at the trial and at Martínez de Hoz's judges, as well as at José Alfredo and Alejandro Martínez de Hoz.

Best wishes!

Aesthetic and narrative treatment

The documentary *Martínez de Hoz* develops along basically classic aesthetic-narrative lines, just as is the case with our preceding documentary, *Awka Liwen*. It is the consequence of our desire, as in the case of the latter, that our film will reach a mass audience, especially in Argentina, that includes age groups and socioeducational parameters representative of such a complex and unequal country such as is Argentina.

Osvaldo, with his great capacity for narrative elegance, tells a fascinating story, focusing his sincere grandfatherly blue eyes on each one of the viewers, strengthening the very empathy that the documentary's script generates in the majority of the audience.

The various interviewees (chosen for their prominent academic standing and their central role in Argentine and German politics and thought, such as Eugenio Zaffaroni, Martín Sabbatella, Daniel "le Rouge" Cohn Bendit, among others) take part, consonant with their expertise, in the narration to move forward a story of great narrative power. Said narrative is based on a literary script that moves along several tracks and is in part circular, in which everything is closely related and each narrated element during each minute of the film ties in with the rest, empowering even more the circular narrative structure of *Awka Liwen*. The principal differentiating element with *Awka Liwen*, as far as the aesthetic-narrative proposal is concerned, is the utilization of humor, a José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz who worked as a trash collector in

Berlin. This detail sharpens the ridiculous nature of the pitiful spectacle of four national judges persecuting Osvaldo Bayer, Mariano Aiello, and Felipe Pigna for *Awka Liwen*.

This young member of the powerful Martínez de Hoz family in Argentina was an itinerant preacher in the province of Burgos who, thanks to an agreement with Rajoy's government with the Chinese government to relinquish on a long term basis the lands that for thousands of years the original peoples of these lands had used for nomadic pasturage, had to sell short his sheep and go live in a hut on the outskirts of Berlin. That is where we will see him gathering cardboard and bottles, selling them and recounting the story of his encounter with his rich, powerful, and miserable distant uncle when he came to visit him in Berlin in 1978.

Also, within the register of historical reconstruction, a group of peasants will take over the Chapadmalal ranch (we make use of aerial views of the British-style main house and of the ranch as a whole), they kill a cow and have a grand Argentine-style barbecue on the lands usurped by this family. Thus, these mockumentary devices allow for the people themselves to act as protagonists in the story the documentary has to tell, which allows for moving the line separating audience and cinematographic characters. Within the fictionalization or recreation of historiographic content, a young woman is invested with the symbolic attributes of the judiciary of the beginnings of the last dictatorship (habeas corpus petitions stamped "DENIED," a gavel, dollar bills, a large crucifix, and so on) in a dark and shadowy hall by a hand that appears from above at the top of the scene, to frame the young new national judge.

Also, in terms of the device for the recreation of reality, a voiceover with the unmistakable nasal accent affected by José Martínez de Hoz addresses Judge Matilde Díaz de Vivar (president of Courtroom M) on behalf of the family pursuing the suit for a ban evoking ties that go back to the Colonial period to order/petition her to pursue those "left-wingers" because they are showing "daddy" in a bad light with the footage in *Awka Liwen*, while at the same time inviting her to the ranch for a "family gathering."

The great plains of the Pampas in the shots of the Chapadmalal ranch, the horizontality of parallel lines within the still-frame, the quietude of the "owners of the land" contrast with the hand-held camera shots of the movement of the peasants who in a somewhat improvised fashion engage in "revolution" because they are hungry. The warmth of the photograph generates an empathy for those who, because of their labor and their history, ought to be the owners of the land.

The utilization of original music is, by contrast with *Awka Liwen*, much less, avoiding compositions with heavy melodies. At times, with the goal of presenting the name of the documentary, we utilize a musical composition that is very aggressive in consonance with the name of the work, which generates in the audience a clearly upsetting state of feeling and discomfort. Then, a piano solo in a comedic registry accompanies Osvaldo in his Kafkaian search for the courtroom in the labyrinthine corridors of the Justice Palace. There, the music will underscore the ridiculousness of how Osvaldo must interrupt his work as a writer and journalist because the Martínez de Hoz family so orders it in the 21st century, a ridiculous situation that the great historian represents with grand histrionic talent.

We also utilize music in numerous passages in the work to generate a counterpoint between what the narrative voice and the images portray and what the musical track suggests.

The utilization of archival material from film, television, and the press plays a large role in the narrative of the film, as it possesses an aesthetic and historiographic value per se, which reinforces the editing with the goal of, on occasion, resignifying the meaning represented by the original footage itself.

It is for this reason that we undertake a work with a profound and studied literary script, the product of two years of historiographic as well as economic sciences research. But it is also an entertaining documentary with its own aesthetic proposal and free and in many cases experimental narrative.

Information

Title: *Martínez de Hoz*

Genre: Documentary

Length: 202 minutes in two parts: Part I, 100 minutes; Part II, 102 minutes

Script Part I and Part II: Mariano Aiello

Director: Marinao Aiello

Producer: Macanudo Films

Narrator: Osvaldo Bayer

Co-producer: Perio- UNLA

Format: HD-1080 24p

Copyright for the Images: Macanudo Films

Sound 5.1 y 2.0

Languages: Spanish, English, and French

Subtitles: English, German, and French

Motivation

In 2008 I wrote that my motivation for *Awka Liwen* was (paraphrasing Che Guevara) “My goal is to create one, two, three Awka Liwens.”

I was born a few days before Che Guevara’s assassination. We can say in retrospect that the idea of social change through armed struggle died with Che in Bolivia [in October 1967]. Osvaldo Bayer once told me about the conversation he had with Ernest Guevara at a dinner in Havana. Guevara explained to him that focus theory could be utilized in Argentina. Osvaldo asked him: “But what if you were attempting to take, for example, Río Cuarto, would the army go to put you down?” Guevara answered, “They’re all mercenaries.”

I grew up in the Argentina of the dictators Onganía, Levingston, Lanuse, Videla, Viola, Galtieri, and Bignone. Then in the limited democracies of Alfonsín, Menem, and Duhalde. I worked in Guatemala on the implementation of the Peace Accords between the guerrillas and that country’s sinister army. I understood the role that the Latin American elites played within their societies and with the powers of the industrialized countries, which was to permit the rampant exploitation of the vast majority in their countries in order to guarantee for themselves the situation of privilege within their societies as faithful guardians of neocolonialism.

I saw in 2008 how the major agribusiness corporations and the mass media attempted to overthrow Argentina's elected government.

So, why then did I make *Awka Liwen*? Because I believe that change is possible through art, culture, and education.

A few months after the premier of *Awka Liwen*, the grandson of the economics minister and civil chief of the last dictatorship, José Alfredo (grandson) and Alejandro Martínez de Hoz, filed a law suit to ban *Awka Liwen* because, according to them, what we show in the film with reference to their great great grandfather, José Toribio Martínez de Hoz, does “damage to the family’s honor.”

This distant relative of the two young men seeking to ban the film was the first president of Sociedad Rural Argentina (S.R.A., Argentine Rural Society) and one of the principal sponsors and backers of the so-called “Desert Campaign” of J.A. Roca and the S.R.A. Thus, with the elimination of the original peoples from these territories, José Toribio Martínez de Hoz received 2,500,000 hectares (9,653 square miles), consolidating his position as the country’s largest landowner. We also refer in *Awka Liwen* to the grandfather of the plaintiffs (who at the time of the suit was still alive), but his grandsons do not base their lawsuit on what we also prove with respect to their close living relative (at the time), but rather on what we narrate concerning a public figure from the time of Juan Manuel Rosas. The reason is that their grandfather was in prison for the serious crimes against humanity committed while he was the strongman of the Videla, Massera, and Agosti dictatorships, and it would be ridiculous for them to allege that the damage to the family honor was caused by *Awka Liwen* and not by their genocidal grandfather.

The trial against *Awka Liwen* fell by lottery to four judges of whom three were named during the very same dictatorship of the grandfather of the plaintiffs. I received death threats and aggressions of all sorts and I continue to be under the threat of a lawsuit, along with Osvaldo Bayer and Felipe Pigna, for making a documentary based on irrefutable historiographic proof. Judicial persecution and the threats continue up to the present.

Explanation of the nature of this judicial aberration is what motivates me to make this documentary, called *Martínez de Hoz*, again along with Osvaldo Bayer.

Curriculum vitae

Osvaldo Bayer

Historian, writer, journalist, movie script writer, he teaches at the Deutsche Stiftung für Entwicklungspolitik (German Foundation for Developmental Politics) in Germany. He holds doctorates from the Universidad de Comahúe and the Universidad de la Patagonia Austral.

He is the principal scriptwriter for the film *La Patagonia rebelde* (Rebel Patagonia), which won the Silver Bear in the 1974 Berlinale Film Festival. It is based on his historical research on the killing of rural workers in the Province of Santa Cruz in 1921.

In 1975, as a consequence of fascist repression, he sought refuge in Germany. He organized from Europe the struggle to stop the genocide in Argentina, as well as that of other Central and South American nations, along with Julio Cortázar, Osvaldo Soriano, Lionel Jospin, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Régis Debray, Laurent Fabius, Robert Badinter, Jack Lang, Simone Signoret, Yves Montand, Catherine, Renaud, Jean Ferrat, Marguerite Duras, among others.

In addition to *La Patagonia rebelde*, he is the author of *Los anarquistas expropiadores y otros ensayos* (Anarchist Expropriators and Other Essays), *Fútbol argentino* (Argentine Soccer), *Rebeldía y Esperanza* (Rebellion and Hope), *Severino di Giovanni, el idealista de la violencia* (Severino di Giovanni, the Idealist of Violence), and the novel *Rainer y Minué* (Rainer and Minué).

He served as editorial secretary of the daily newspaper *Clarín*, as general secretary of the press union of the city of Buenos Aires, and he held full and honorary professorships in Human Rights of the College of Philosophy and Letters of the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA).

He currently writes for the daily newspaper *Página 12* and is one of the most famous major intellectuals in the human rights struggle and in the fight for the rights of the indigenous people of Latin America.

In 2008, in a meeting with President Cristina Fernández at the Casa Rosada, he proposed that the Argentine State “recognize the crimes against humanity committed against the original peoples and that it apologizes for them.”

Mariano Aiello

Filmmaker, producer, writer, and art curator, he holds a doctorate in Law and did postgraduate studies in Parliamentary Studies, Social Psychology, and political violence. He has international and multicultural work experience, principally in Latin America, in international organizations. He has particular strength in social science research. His latest documentary, *Awka Liwen*, was selected by the Washington Post as “the cultural event of the day” and was a nominee at the 2012 New York Film Festival/Latinbeat, and it has thirty nominations and five first prizes in film festivals throughout the world. Aiello organized the Argentine Festival in Guatemala City in 2002 and is the founder of the Argentine Festival of Berlin.

Filmography

1992 – *Trick*. Fiction (10 minutes)

2004 – *Operation of Open Pit Gold Mines in Guatemala*. Marlin Project. Documentary (23 minutes)

2004 – *Operation of Nickel Mine in Mayan Lands*, Phoenix Project; Spanish and Q’eqchi’. Documentary (23 minutes)

2004-05 – *Guatemalan Migration Flows to Canada*. Documentary (15 minutes)

2006 – *Natural Uruguay and the Consensus of Washington*. Documentary (44 minutes)

2006 – *Pickers*. Documentary (11 minutes)

2010 – *Awka Liwen/Rebellion at Dawn*. Documentary (77 minutes). Narration by Osvaldo Bayer. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1511325/>

2016 – *Martínez de Hoz*. Documentary (202 minutes). With Osvaldo Bayer.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt5611218>

2017 – *Rigoberta*. Documentary (90 minutes). In production, with the participation of Nobel Peace Prize Winner Dr Rigoberta Menchú Tum

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