

Movie Draft: *Americano*

by Brandon Kruse

(*Americano* is one of four made-up films generated during PoopReading.com's recent [Movie Draft](#).)

There's a moment early on in *Americano* when you realize, as you stare into the ample cleavage of Penélope Cruz while she uses her feminine wiles to seduce a rich fool who will soon be parted from his money, that you are in the presence of masterful filmmaking. And that feeling rarely goes away during the film's entire two-hour running time.

What Cruz and her lady friends are up to is kidnapping, part of a "bilk the Columbian tourists" moneymaking scheme hatched by her lover, disillusioned ex-Army Ranger Paul Kestler (a wild-eyed, spittle-spewing Michael Shannon). Kestler also runs a drugs-and-weapons operation in the Columbian rainforest, and in general, terrifies everyone around him. You quickly get the feeling that, unlike *Apocalypse Now*'s Colonel Kurtz, the jungle didn't drive Kestler insane; he was already that way when he got there.

However, his gravy train may be nearing the end of the line. A looming trade agreement between Colombia and the U.S. threatens to empower the Colombian government, and that will likely put Kestler and Maria's jungle empire at risk.

But a gift falls into their lap in the form of young news researcher Ellie Kubusheskie (a radiant Anne Hathaway), who is sent to Columbia to help with a story on the U.S./Columbia trade talks. Kestler quickly pegs Ellie as the daughter of Tom Kubusheskie (Frank Langella in full gravitas mode), who just so happens to be the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, a man who has the President's ear on the impending trade agreement. After a little background digging, Kestler and Maria get the feeling that their usual seduction-and-kidnapping plan with Maria might work on Ellie. They're right.

About that scene. You may think that there's no place for a hot 17-minute lesbian romp between two sexy Hollywood starlets in the middle of a taut action thriller with political overtones, but you would be very, very wrong. Oh so wrong. So so wrong...

Where was I?

Kestler of course then uses Ellie to get to Tom, and demands that the Secretary use his influence to kill the trade agreement. But Tom has an ace up his sleeve: during the Vietnam War, he once saved the life of a special forces soldier named William Cade (Mickey Rourke), who went on to conduct several clandestine CIA operations in Central and South America before disappearing into an anonymous, spartan life outside a small village in Panama. Desperate to save his daughter and avoid having to kill the trade deal he's worked so hard on, Tom calls in his favor with Cade, and

asks him to take care of Kestler.

Cade is utterly and completely a Rourke creation. Never has a man so covered in dirt and filth (you can practically see the stink lines coming off of him) and looking so beaten down by life oozed such a raw, palpable sexual magnetism. You can feel the heat radiating under Rourke's scenes with Cruz, with Hathaway, with a nubile young Panamanian villager, and disturbingly, even with Langella. You get the feeling that, at any given moment, Rourke may suddenly start having sex with anyone or anything on screen. And given his personal history, you're probably right.

Cade's entrance ups the action quotient, and Rourke carries off that portion of his role with sly flair. The movie climaxes with an electrifying showdown in the Columbian jungle, one that, without giving away too much, contains numerous shots of an ever-so-sweaty Cruz in a tank top firing a machine gun, a quirky Rourke monologue about malaria, and a weapon hidden in the unlikeliest of places on Shannon's body. (Think you know where? Guess again.)

If the movie has one flaw, it's that the concept of Cruz's Maria as the lover of Shannon's Kestler is a bit of a stretch, mostly because of Shannon's extreme overcommitment to his character's deranged eccentricities. (His Kestler bites the heads off of jungle snakes, poops in a suitcase, and likes to masturbate on the U.S. flag. Rumor has it that none of these moments were in the original script, and that they were filmed without props, camera tricks and/or body doubles. Eww.)

Americano takes the geopolitical thriller and turns it on its ear, then pretty much has its way with it. And as a result, you won't likely find a more titillating, heart-pumping, exhilarating moviegoing experience the rest of this year.

Americano is rated R for jungle carnage, language that sailors only wish they knew, excessive amounts of side boob, suggestive and experimental lesbianism, gratuitous shots of Mickey Rourke's ass, and more of Michael Shannon than you'd ever care to see.
