

A BABEL DOC PRODUCTION

BOLSONARO, THE FAR SIDE OF BRAZIL

A FILM BY INGRID PIPONIOT AND VINCENT RIMBAUX

LENGTH: 52' & 70'

DELIVERY: MAY 2022



SYNOPSIS

He is known as the "Trump of the tropics," the "Cavalo," the uncontrollable horseman, the disruptive populist, or even "The Myth." Known for his anti-communist rhetoric, his provocative words on Amazonia, the dictatorship, women, homosexuality, firearms, and now for his seemingly unreadable governance. Yet, he is a political figure far more complex than the grotesque portrait painted of him. Supported by the country's various conservative forces he is already gearing up for the 2022 elections. And he has no doubts about its outcome : "I will leave the presidential palace in 2027!".

Portrait of a man that no one expected but who did not come to power by chance. A man whose journey tells the story of an entirely different Brazil.



TREATMENT

In October 2022, the former cavalry captain will probably face Lula, the fallen ex-president who has now been cleared of all charges. Two opposing sides, irreconcilable. Today Brazil is more divided than ever, and Jair Bolsonaro, despite a disastrous record, both on the management of the pandemic and the economy, continues to receive overwhelming support with a staggering 30% popularity. In front of tens of thousands of supporters at the beginning of September, the Brazilian president addresses the crowd and declares: "Only God can remove me from power."

For the first time, close friends and advisers of Jair Bolsonaro speak out on camera. His lifelong friend, political comrades, his son, Flavio, ministers of his government, and some former allies.

This film tells the story of Bolsonaro's childhood, education, and military training as told by his childhood friend, João Evangelista Correa. Anecdotes of the daily life of a provincial town depict the young Bolsonaro from the small middle class in a post-dictatorship Brazil haunted by anti-communism but also by the hatred of the upper class and the wealthy. A few years later, he joined the army, appearing to be a rebel being the worst of his unit. **Hierarchy is not his business, but order is.**

The young Jair was already full of contradictions, and it was Waldir Ferraz, his shadow advisor who witnessed his political debut. An insignificant deputy for thirty years, he especially distinguished himself during the impeachment of ex-president Dilma Rousseff by declaring that the dictatorship's generals had done well in torturing her. Familiar with provocative language against women and LGBTQ community, who could have ever imagined that he would end up being Brazil's president ?

One thing is sure: he did not come to power by chance. He is supported by the old power structure, the landowners, the evangelicals, and the armed forces. The famous BBB: Bible, Beef, and Bullets. They are the ones who made his election possible. Since then, he has governed by mixing his convictions, his obsessions, and their expectations. These sometimes conflicting currents explain his chaotic governance.

On the one hand, the ideological, conservative, anti-communist, and anti-Chinese wing is led by **evangelical lobbies** whose scope is mainly national—on the other. On the other hand the branch that defends economic pragmatism and puts commercial interests before ideology is driven by **agricultural and industrial legislation**. Between these two fronts, **the military**, which entered the government for the first time since 1985 (9 ministerial appointments) claiming to be the guardian of national interest and diplomatic stability, and who has its own political agenda.

Bolsonaro is constantly playing both sides of the fence, sometimes liberal to appeal to the elites who run the country, occasionally ultra-conservative to appeal to his electoral base. But, tactical or not, this duality has its challenges.

As he enters his final year in office, the former cavalry captain is now at a crossroad, facing risky and crucial choices, each involving significant sacrifices and each potentially costing him his seat or his re-election.

This film mixes interviews, originally shot material, archives, and very cinematographic illustrations. **We explore Jair Bolsonaro's values** through his political ambitions and obsessions. Members of his cabinet, opposing voices from civil society and observers will help us revisit his first term in office. In the background, the film portrays Bolsonaro's Brazil and its post-dictatorship generation.

This film echoes the international news: the rise to power of a populist, anti-progressist, and retrograde politician who has brought to light another face of Brazil. His election gave a voice to those who felt under represented and released homophobic and racist instincts in the country. Brazil's diversity is under attack. Unfortunately, no country is safe from such a fate.

CHARACTERS

RELATIVES



Waldir Ferraz, the shadow advisor (BR)

"He has always been conservative, even a dress he thinks nonsense! But he's right, it comes from his upbringing, damn!"



João Evangelista Correa, the childhood friend (BR)

"The financial situation of the people in the village was pitiful. The day we had meat on the table, it was a party."

GOVERNEMENT



Damares Alves, the evangelical pastor, former Minister (BR)

"Bolsonaro is Christian, Bolsonaro prays, Bolsonaro reads the Bible. We're not ashamed of that, that's what Brazil has chosen: a Christian government."



Carlos Santos Cruz, the general, former Minister (BR)

"It is one thing to be conservative, to be an extremist is another"

OPPONENTS



Felipe Neto, the activist, Brazil's #1 YouTuber, TIME 100 (BR)

"Online, Bolsonaro is king because he doesn't need to develop his ideas. Simple, polemical tweets will do the trick!"



Rebeca Carbinatto, the pandemic doctor (BR)

"He has his own ideology, and is able to convince many people. He has done exactly the opposite of what the health institutions recommend. And it is costing lives."

CHARACTERS

EXPERTS



Sylvio Costa, political journalist in Brasilia (BR)

"I think the military has found power, money, prestige and popularity in Bolsonaro."



Patricia Campos Mello, reporter at Folha de São Paulo (BR)

"The white, conservative, middle-class man, for years felt neglected, unseen. But all of a sudden, it found its representative!"



Bruno Meyerfeld, Le Monde's correspondent in Brazil (FR)

"France has a romantic image of Brazil, of beaches and samba, especially since the Lula years. However, it is a country that has always been deeply conservative"



Benjamin Teitelbaum, ethnographer, far-right specialist (US)

"Bolsonaro's Brazil is one of the most emblematic cases of far-right populism, influenced by obscure movements, articulated at an international level".



Mayara Santiago, economic analyst at FGV University (BR)

"Bolsonaro was elected with the promise of reviving the economy with ultra-liberal policies. 3 years later, Brazil is going through one of the worst economic crises in recent years!"



Christopher Garman, political analyst at Eurasia Group (US)

"Under Trump, Bolsonaro always placed the United States at the top of the pyramid. But since Biden, the situation has become more tense, especially around environmental issues."

THE CREATIVE TEAM

THE PRODUCER



Stéphanie Lebrun, producer and founder of Babel Doc

French director & producer who lived 5 years in Brazil. She founded Babel Doc with offices in Rio, New Delhi, Miami and Paris. She won an **International Emmy Award for *Ressaca*** by Vincent Rimbau & Patrzia Landi (2020). A tale on the downfall of Brazil through the eye of Rio de Janeiro's Opera Ballet.

THE CO-DIRECTORS



Ingrid Piponiot, director, carioca since 2015

Ingrid is a graduate of Sciences Po, Paris. She is Franco-Argentine and has been working in Brazil for 6 years specializing in Brazilian political life. She has co-written two documentaries on the political situation in Brazil for LCP.



Vincent Rimbau, International Emmy Award Winner 2020

Vincent is a filmmaker who has been living in Brazil for 20 years. He wrote and directed *Ressaca*, an award-winning documentary on Brazil recession.

THE EDITOR



Damien Pasinetti, the editor

He has been working as a film editor in Paris for 15 years, notably for CAPA, Memento and Babel Doc. The films he has edited have won multiple awards, including the Albert Londres prize for the *Dictator's Men* by Marjolaine Grappe.

PLANNING & TRAILER



Over one year shooting from fall 2021 to spring 2022. 60% of the film has already been shot along with the main interviews (See list). We will have additional shootings to cover rainforest, conversion therapy, economic crisis... We have secured ITWs with Flavio Bolsonaro and Felipe Neto.

Click above for trailer

First Rough Cut Delivery: December 2021

Editing schedule: November 2021 & March 2022

Film Delivery: May 2022



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