

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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Anaconda (1997)

Luis Llosa Urquidí

OVERVIEW

Luis Llosa Urquidí was born in Lima, Peru in 1951. He is a film director, who is very well known in Peru because of his early works. Overall, arts run in his family since his uncle is Mario Vargas Llosa the Nobel Literature Prize Winner and Claudia Llosa, his niece is also a film director. Luis Llosa is a filmmaker, he has done many movies that have diverse themes such as exploration and nature developed in action -packed thrillers-. Also, he has produced tv series and soap operas. During the 80s, Luis Llosa innovated Peruvian television, when he started to include scenes outside the set. He took the action to the streets and was able to record the cities and its architecture, many times in public places as well. Another innovation that he brought to the Peruvian cinema was starting a new phase in the film industry when he began the creation of Iguana Productions.

SYNOPSIS

A research team with the purpose of making a documentary about the Amazon Basin, and the Shirishama Indians known as the "People of the mist" gets together and soon after the action begins. This documentary crew navigates the Amazon and suddenly picks up a stranger who tricks them into chasing a monstrous and deadly 40-foot-long snake. Even though there are certain myths that warn them about their journey, this research group goes and experiences an encounter with an Anaconda.

CHARACTERS

Terry Flores

Scholar and filmmaker, she is going to make her first documentary in the Amazon Basin about the Shirishamas People. She seems ecologically centered, and always worries about her crew.

Brave From the moment she decides to undertake a study to document people who live in unknown lands, far from their environment and knowing that they will face difficult incidents, she seems determined and focused on what she wants. The way she deals with the problems and conflicts that happen in the film, makes her a great female character. She fights for her ideals, for her friends and colleagues.

Strong A lady that is strong not only physically, but mentally. She is capable of getting her objectives done, and she is always positive and optimistic. Even though she does not know what to do, she manages to always be in control and tries to save not only herself but her crew.

Danny Rich

A friend of Terry Flores, he is the documentary's cameraman. He has a personality that is not daunted, brave and determined, he survives all the vicissitudes that he faces.

Courageous He proves himself to be brave from the beginning when Captain Mateo stays behind them and Serone being Mateo's friend doesn't go looking for him, but Danny does.

Protector He shows this attitude towards Terry and towards the crew. He always wants to protect, help and support everyone so that they come out of this experience undefeated. His loyalty for the rest of the crew, makes him also a kind of a hero.

Paul Serone

A man in his late fifties, who has devoted his life to hunting serpents and to sell them on the black market for millions of dollars. Aggressive, bossy he soon starts to rule the boat and the crew. An

explorer who is very greedy and dishonest who wants to get economic benefits from the capture of the Anaconda. For him the lives of the people of the crew are not important; he only wants to make the big money for the Anaconda.

Villain Unable to proceed to benefit others, he is the antihero of this movie. He doesn't care how many lives there are to lose, if he gets his end result of capturing an Anaconda

Aggressive His behavior from the beginning dictated how to make this trip: he uses weapons to be heard and impose order. Also, the attitude that he has in front of Terry, Danny and Denise at the end, shows that he is an aggressive and unscrupulous man. Finally, the way the rest of his crew members die without him caring.

Dr. Steven Cale Professor Cale has studied the tribes that live in the Amazon Basin for many years. Adventurous and excited about the expedition, he shows courage and not being afraid to pursue his goals.

Warren Westridge Narrator. Lives a snob life and wants to fix everything with money.

Gary Dixon Sound Producer

Denise Kalberg Producer of the documentary

Mateo Native of Brazil, he is the pilot of the boat.

Poacher A lonely man in his forties, he is by himself on a boat in the jungle.

THEMES

Quest A research and study trip to explore new tribes and learn more about the jungle, is totally unsuccessful due to the vileness of a human being. While one side is focused on the knowledge, spirituality and traditions of this tribe, another side makes us look at capitalism, how much can you pay for the skin of an Anaconda.

Greed The vileness and selfish attitude of Serone allows us to see a negative human side and poor spirit as well. He needs to get money and does not care about the lives of his friends, Mateo and Poacher. He does not care about the ecosystem, he only needs his money in order to live a plentiful life.

Dishonesty Paul Serone is the personification of this characteristic. From the first encounter when they saw him by himself, Serone and Mateo already had everything planned. Dishonesty plays a huge topic in this movie. Also, at the end they are able to affirm that dishonesty is not going to take anybody anywhere.

SCENES

Warning As a warning, information is provided about the nature of the Anaconda. Moreover, we have some details and characteristics of this lethal animal. Bold red letters over a black screen produce a little bit of intrigue to the spectators and foreshadow the nature of the film. This is a thriller with lots of action, and a huge serpent will be the topic in the movie.

Nervousness The Amazon is visible on the screen -calm and quiet, and then the image starts capturing the movement of the Amazon Basin, and then it darkens, and a rather eerie sound is heard. The nervousness can be seen through the character who is known as a Poacher and is in a small boat with caged animals, he begins to fear for his life since he senses the existence of a strange being that may be an Anaconda. He hastily tries to communicate several times and asks for help but failing to do so and as the cries of the animals intensify, he decides to go up in search of refuge, with a gun, a couple of times. He tries to stop the being that is chasing him, but when he does not succeed, decides to shoot himself in the head, and committs suicide.

Gathering All these different distinguished characters, that are the documentary crew, start to gather at the Ariau Jungle Hotel in the Deep Amazon in Brazil so they can start their expedition in order to shoot a documentary about the Shirishama Indians, the People of the Mist in the Amazon. In a room, Terry Flores is looking at her computer, a few screens about the people in the mist or the Shirishama Indians, when someone knocks at the door. Professor Cale comes to her room because

he just arrived and wants to catch up with her. Apparently, they like each other and are very excited to start this project together.

Getting to know the crew In the morning, Terry sees Danny and runs towards him, they both were classmates in the past and he is really happy for her. Also, Warren Westridge comes to the boat carrying two suitcases that appear to be all sorts of wine. He seems arrogant. Professor Cale tells everyone that they will start with their trip.

Starting the video In the Micaela Boat, Mateo starts the expedition in the Amazon Basin. While traveling the crew starts to record certain parts of the documentary. The first introduction by Westridge, who is the main narrator of the documentary, is really interesting because he talks about these tribes that have never been studied before.

Encountering a Stranger Suddenly the crew starts navigating and finds a stranger that needs help. Professor Cale decides to rescue him, and the stranger tells about his life and that he has seen the Shirishama Indians. The stranger whose name is Paul Serone starts telling them about the Shirishama Tribe and the different statues and Totems that they believe in, particularly a serpent that is very important in their representations. He acts very ambiguous and complex in many senses.

At the River Terry Flores and Dr. Steve Cale have a little romance when they start talking about the documentary that they are going to shoot and the animals that live in the Amazon. In a romantic scene while talking about the nature of the fireflies, Dr. Cale and Terry start to kiss. During that calm night, an Anaconda is seen trying to obtain a cougar as prey. Finally, the Anaconda catches the puma and kills him. Then she takes it with her. To make the scene a little more realistic, the Anaconda, at the time that it kills its prey, suffocates it so much that their eyes come off the body.

Navigating The next morning Westridge is playing golf while navigating, and Danny is listening to very loud rap music which does not allow Westridge to focus. He goes to turn off the radio and Danny slaps at his hand. Dr. Cale sees a Serpent Totem, and wonders about the Shirishama Indians, Serone starts telling everything about the Shirishamas, how this tribe worships the serpents. Serone tells Cale that they are on a route that he wants to go, and Cale decides to go through the other side. Some tension starts to arise during this scene between both of them. Dr. Cale on one side represents the knowledge of books and theories, but on the other side Paul Serone is an explorer who does not look into the studies of the tribe, but in the amount of money that he can get if he sells the Anaconda.

Surprise When Gary and Denise decide to record sounds, they leave the boat; they are kissing when suddenly they feel a presence. With great suddenness, they start to run as Paul Serone appears out of nowhere and kills the animal that was chasing them, a wild boar. He takes the animal to the boat and tells everyone that they will have food for a week. He asks Mateo if he can peel it and cut it.

Expedition Continues The rope from the boat gets entangled with the propeller of the motor and Dr. Steve Cale decides to solve the problem. Paul Serone offers to do it himself, but Dr. Cale does not trust him, so he goes underwater. When he is under the water, it is seen that he has problems and they go to help him. Gary and Danny jump to his rescue and bring him to the boat. Mateo finds something in his mouth and they take it out. A deadly and poisonous wasp has stung him. Paul Serone punctures his neck and injects him with alcohol. Dr. Steve Cale begins to breathe again, after having been suffocating. Terry is by Dr. Cale's side all the time and worries about his health.

Rushing to the Hospital Since Dr. Steve Cale needs to be at the hospital right away to be treated, the crew is in the hands of the vile Paul Serone. He advises them to take another path, which would take them to the heart of the jungle, where the Anaconda is, so he can capture it; they are not going where the crew thinks it is going, in order to save Dr. Cale. Danny begins to get suspicious about Serone's actions, and starts wondering about his intentions.

Blowing the Wooden Wall When they continue sailing down the river, they come across a wooden wall that prevents them from going down that path. Serone wants to blow it up, while Terry, very dismayed, thinks about the ecological change that will be produced by using dynamite. She is

not really convinced about what to do. Therefore, Westridge agrees to blow up the wooden wall so they can continue with their journey, and Serone asks for help from Gary to place the dynamite into a couple of places. They managed to blow it up and out of nowhere, thousands of small, medium and large serpents surrounded the crew. While most of them are panicking because of the presence of the snakes, Serone affirms that they are babies. One of the snakes starts biting the finger of Westridge, and Serone very calmly helps him to get it off. Obviously, very ironic in his attitude, Serone tells them that they are overreacting.

Serone's in charge While the crew starts to worry about their situation Serone takes them to the heart of the Amazon Basin so he can capture his Anaconda. Danny does not trust Serone nor does Terry. Serone tells Mateo to stop and Terry asks him why. They start arguing because of the tense situation with Dr. Cale's condition and all the impediments to get him to a hospital.

Searching for combustible Paul Serone sees another abandoned ship and decides to go in search of fuel. He asks Mateo to go with him, and Danny follows to record some images of the other boat. Serone knows the Poacher's boat and even finds a newspaper picture of the Poacher, with Mateo and him holding an Anaconda. So, they definitely knew each other before this expedition, and they were planning this incident. Serone manages to hide that newspaper picture of the three of them and Danny gets in the boat and tells Serone that it is very spooky. Serone finds a box with some items and decides to take it to their ship. They are going back, when suddenly Mateo is attacked by the serpent. Mateo does not come back to the boat, so Danny decides to go back and looks for him, but he cannot find Mateo anywhere. Paul Serone very coldly tells him that it is in vain that he is going to look for Mateo, because he is dead.

Boat at night They were waiting for Mateo to come back, even though Serone and Westridge know that Mateo has been eaten by some animal. They have the lights pointed in the direction where Mateo got lost. Serone tries to convince Gary that capturing the Anaconda is a business that can bring them up to a million dollars. Little by little he tries to make Gary think about the benefits to getting rich. Finally, he convinces Gary and they decide to capture the serpent.

Crew splitted Even though they did not want to, they started following Paul Serone because he fired his gun towards Danny, establishing his power. While navigating, Serone is trying to get the Anaconda, and Gary is guarding so everyone follows Serone's orders. He captures the serpent but it manages to free itself. The Anaconda attacks Westridge, Terry and Denise. Gary saves her, he goes into the river and the Anaconda traps him. Serone, instead of shooting the Anaconda and saving Gary's life, tells Terry that for him it is better to have the Anaconda alive, so they lost Gary in a terrifying scene.

Capture the Anaconda They are all afraid and they have no other way but to follow Serone's orders since he has the weapons and is threatening them. The new plan is to capture the Anaconda so they can do something salvageable with the trip. Everyone is very nervous about it.

Conspiracy In the tranquility of the night, Terry remembers that many times she has seen Paul Serone looking at her, she puts on lipstick and manages to go to see Serone to the cabin. She insinuates that she wants something more than just a talk, while he agrees to kiss her, he sees in the mirror the image of Danny and Warren Westridge attacking him. Paul Serone faints and when he wakes up, he is tied to the boat.

Revenge Denise (Gary's girlfriend) tries to seek revenge and with a knife in her hand, she tries to kill Serone. When he realizes her intentions, he jumps and wraps her neck with his legs, trying to suffocate her. Finally, he kills her and throws her to the river, while Terry and Danny are trying to find fuel for the boat, Paul Serone frees himself and awaits.

Terry and Danny captured After Paul Serone kills Denise, he tries to kill Terry and Danny by throwing them monkey's blood and making sure the Anaconda goes where they are, so he can capture the Anaconda. Of course Danny and Terry are going to fight and in a moment of suspense, the Anaconda bites and swallows Serone, while Terry and Danny are safe for the moment. Little by little, we can see how the Anaconda suffocates its prey, in this case, Serone.

Spewing the prey Of course, the Anaconda comes back for Terri and Danny since it is a

characteristic of these types of animals to show that they are not satisfied after eating a victim, they will regurgitate their prey in order to kill and eat again. The Anaconda comes back and throws up Serone's body. Danny kills the Anaconda with an ax, and finally they get some peace.

Finding the Shirishama At the end, there is an image of the sun in the river and the Shirishamas or the "People of the Mist", are found in their canoes with colorful ornaments in white outfits celebrating life and that finally they have gotten rid of that monstrous and lethal serpent. In a gratitude way, they are all around the totem with white flowers, giving hope and celebrating life.

IMAGES



Mateo (the Captain) and the Anaconda



Anaconda and Danny



Westridge and the Anaconda



Terry and Danny trapped and engulfed by an anaconda