

THE CALL

Feature Film Screenplay · Social Thriller

Written by

Fernando Gracia Ortuño

Member of Guionistes Associats de Catalunya (GAC)

Confidential document. All rights reserved by the author.

Spec Sheet

Title	THE CALL
Genre	Social Thriller / Drama
Format	Feature film
Page count	96
Original language	Spanish (Castilian)
Setting	Rural Andalusia, Spain (fictional)
Project status	Complete screenplay, first draft locked
Author	Fernando Gracia Ortuño

Logline

In an isolated village in rural Andalusia, a young man is murdered after standing up for his mother against the traffickers who control local life. His brother returns to bury him and discovers that the real fight isn't against the killers, but against the silence that protects them.

Synopsis

Álex, a lawyer based in Barcelona, receives the call he never saw coming: his younger brother, Fran, has died in a traffic accident back in his hometown. What looks like a routine tragedy reveals itself, within hours, as something far darker: days earlier, Fran confronted the drug traffickers who control the village in order to defend his mother, Nora, owner of a bar who refuses to be intimidated.

Back in the village, Álex reunites with Natalia, Fran's girlfriend, and Cristian, his best friend, both caught between grief and a fear that has lived in the community for generations. As Álex pulls the thread, he uncovers a web of threats, surveillance, and complicit silence pointing to a premeditated murder, orchestrated by Mané, the organization's calm and calculating leader, and carried out by Kiko, his right hand — impulsive and humiliated after losing a prior confrontation with Fran.

What begins as a personal investigation becomes a crack in the wall of fear that sustains the gang's power. Witnesses who once denied seeing anything begin, one by one, to find the courage to speak. The retaliation is swift: Nora's bar burns in an attack that, instead of silencing the village, ends up uniting it. As the police closes in on the organization, the story takes a final, unexpected turn: institutional justice — slow, limited, insufficient for some — collides with the need for personal justice, when a member of the family decides the court's verdict isn't enough.

THE CALL is, ultimately, the story of a village that learns, too late, to stop being afraid — and the price that costs those who make it happen.

Main Characters

ÁLEX

Protagonist. A 28-30-year-old lawyer based in Barcelona. Rational, contained, used to resolving conflict with arguments rather than force. Fran's death forces him into a kind of battle his training never prepared him for: one where the law isn't enough. His arc moves from disbelief to determination, and finally to the helplessness of realizing that institutional justice has limits he cannot fully accept.

FRAN

The younger brother. Present only in the opening sequence and in flashbacks, his death drives the entire story. Luminous, brave almost without trying, incapable of looking away when someone he loves is in danger. His memory — and the guilt of not having been listened to in time — runs through the whole film.

NORA

The mother. Owner of the village bar, a woman whose character was forged over decades of never asking anyone's permission. Her refusal to be intimidated by the traffickers sets the tragedy in motion, and her guilt over it is one of the strongest emotional engines of the script. Capable of both brutal tenderness and a harshness that wounds those she loves most.

NATALIA

Fran's girlfriend. A university student, determined, with a resolve that grows as the story progresses. She moves from a figure of passive grief to an active force in the investigation, her moral clarity often pushing Álex to act.

CRISTIAN

Fran's best friend since childhood. Weighed down by guilt for not being there when Fran needed him, his arc is one of fear turning into resolve: from silent witness to the first person willing to name the guilty, paying a physical price for it.

MANÉ

Main antagonist. Leader of the local drug trafficking organization. Cold, calculating, aware that real power isn't sustained through visible violence but through fear accumulated over decades. His tragedy is that of a man who understands the rules of power better than anyone — and loses precisely when someone stops fearing him.

KIKO

Secondary antagonist, Mané's right hand. Impulsive, insecure after his public humiliation at Fran's hands, constantly seeking validation through violence. His impatience is what ultimately triggers the mistakes that expose the entire organization.

RIVAS

Sergeant of the Guardia Civil in the village. Thirty years of service living alongside a truth he could never prove. His arc runs parallel to Álex's: that of someone who regains the ability to act once the village's fear finally starts to break.

TONI

Álex and Fran's sister. Absent, conflicted, marked by a broken relationship with Nora. Her return at the end raises an uncomfortable question about the limits of institutional justice in the face of unresolved pain.

Statement of Intent

THE CALL grows out of a question I find urgent: what happens in small communities when fear becomes the unwritten system of government over a territory? This isn't an abstract question. Rural Spain has, across different parts of its geography, realities of informal control — drug trafficking, complicity, silence imposed across generations — that rarely find their place in contemporary Spanish fiction with the tone they deserve: neither sensationalist nor paternalistic, but observed from the inside, with the same restraint the village itself learns to live with its own wound.

The screenplay is inspired by real dynamics and events from the Spanish social landscape — not by one specific personal story, but by a pattern that repeats itself: communities that normalize the presence of those who control them because the cost of speaking up is too high. I was interested in dramatizing not the crime itself, but the collective process of ceasing to be afraid: how a silence sustained for decades begins to crack, what it personally costs each individual to take that step, and what happens when institutional justice finally arrives — but arrives late, or incomplete.

Stylistically, I'm aiming for a restrained, almost documentary-like observation of the everyday, which breaks into moments of sharp, unchoreographed violence. My reference points are Alejandro González Iñárritu and Guillermo Arriaga — particularly in their use of non-linear time in the early acts and their choral construction of characters who, unknowingly, converge toward the same tragedy — as well as the narrative pulse of *Sicario* or *Children of Men*: thrillers that never lose sight of their social backbone, and that trust silence and the gaze as much as dialogue.

The final turn — a character's decision to take justice into her own hands in the face of the legal system's limits — isn't meant to offer a comfortable moral answer. It's meant, precisely, to unsettle: to leave the audience with the same unresolved question that runs through the village's community. How far can the law repair us? And if it can't, what's left?

Sequence Treatment

Act I — The Call

A seemingly routine phone call between Álex and Fran later reveals itself as their last conversation. Back in the village, Fran lives a bright life alongside Natalia and Cristian, until he confronts Kiko at his mother Nora's bar, defending her against a threat from the local traffickers. That same night, Antonio (their father) calls Álex in Barcelona: Fran is dead, reportedly in a traffic accident. Álex travels to the village, unaware he is about to step into the most important story of his life.

Act II, Block I — The Memory Takes Shape

Álex arrives in the village to find a grief that doesn't add up with the official story: his mother blames herself, Cristian avoids questions, and the village is thick with a fear no one names. Through Natalia and

Cristian, Álex reconstructs what happened at the bar and discovers, via a revealing flashback, that one man watched the whole scene in absolute silence: Mané. That calculated passivity turns the case into something far more sinister than an outburst — a sentence.

Act II, Block II — The Wall of Silence

Álex, Natalia, and Cristian try to find witnesses. Everyone denies having seen anything. Sergeant Rivas, who has known for years who runs the local drug trade, is bound by a lack of evidence. The investigation advances through a chance video that reveals the traffickers' car was watching Fran days before the murder — no longer a suspicion, but a working theory of the case. Retaliation comes through violence: a beating for Cristian, a threat carved into the bar's door, and finally an arson attack that destroys Nora's business — but instead of breaking the village, it finally unites it.

Act II, Final Block — The Night Fear Changed Sides

After the fire, a key witness — the old fisherman who had denied everything from the start — decides to break his silence. His testimony opens the door to a cascade of statements that, one by one, complete the case against Mané's organization. The block closes with the certainty that the wall of fear that protected the killers for years has cracked beyond repair.

Act III — The Ending

The Guardia Civil carries out a coordinated operation that ends with the arrest of Mané and his organization, following a final assault by Kiko on Álex that provides the decisive evidence. The trial convicts those responsible, but the sentence — insufficient in some eyes — triggers the final turn: Toni, Álex and Fran's estranged sister, shoots Mané on the courthouse steps, convinced that institutional justice was never going to be enough. The film closes with the village rebuilding, literally and symbolically, what fear had kept in ruins for years — and with Nora finally deciding to leave behind a place that can no longer hold so many memories.

Author's CV and Biography

Fernando Gracia Ortuño is a Barcelona-based writer and screenwriter, a member of Guionistes Associats de Catalunya (GAC). He works in both Spanish and English, with a clear focus on socially engaged, tonally restrained storytelling, in the vein of directors such as Alejandro González Iñárritu and reference titles like *Sicario*, *Children of Men*, or *21 Grams*.

His background as a storyteller begins in literary fiction: he is the author of the novel *Rehenes del Abismo* (*Hostages of the Abyss*, 2020), registered with Safe Creative, which he later adapted into a feature screenplay. That adaptation has been recognized on the international festival circuit, earning an 8/10 score from Blastoff's professional coverage, an Official Selection at the Swedish International Film Festival, six awards at the Caravan International Film Festival, finalist status at the Chicago Script Awards, and two awards at the Art Film Awards, among other recognitions.

Fernando is currently developing *THE CALL*, his second feature, a social thriller set in rural Andalusia that deepens the thematic threads — social tension, fear-silenced communities, justice and its limits — that define his voice as a screenwriter.

Contact

Fernando Gracia Ortuño

Screenwriter and writer | Member of Guionistes Associats de Catalunya (GAC)

Professional profile: filmfreeway.com/profile/FernandoGracia

Barcelona, Spain