

THE CALL

PRODUCTION DOSSIER

Social Thriller · Rural Neo-Noir · Feature Film

*In a town where everyone knows and no one speaks, one
death breaks twenty years of silence.*

FERNANDO GRACIA ORTUÑO

AUTHOR AND SCREENWRITER

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PROJECT DETAILS

ORIGINAL TITLE	La Llamada
INTERNATIONAL TITLE	The Call
GENRE	Social Thriller · Rural Neo-Noir
FORMAT	Feature Film
COUNTRY	Spain
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE	Spanish (Castilian)
SETTING	Contemporary Andalusia (Costa de la Luz, Cádiz)
AUTHOR AND SCREENWRITER	Fernando Gracia Ortuño
PROJECT STATUS	Completed Screenplay · Active International Festival Submission
ESTIMATED BUDGET	€3,500,000 (mid-range Spanish production)
REGISTRATION	Safe Creative · Certified SHA-256 Hash
MEMBER	Guionistes Associats de Catalunya (GAC) · SGAE

SYNOPSIS

When twenty-year-old Fran dies in what is officially ruled a traffic accident in his hometown, his older brother Álex — a lawyer who fled years ago to Barcelona in search of a life far from that place — returns for the funeral, determined to stay only as long as necessary. But something doesn't add up: days before his death, Fran stood up to the drug dealers who control the town, defending his mother Nora, owner of the town's only bar. As Álex starts asking questions, he discovers that everyone knows something, and no one is willing to say it out loud.

What begins as grief turns into a quiet investigation. Alongside Natalia, Fran's girlfriend, and Cristian, his best friend, Álex pieces together his brother's final days, running headfirst into a wall of fear built over generations. The threat soon becomes explicit: Nora's bar is set on fire one night, and Álex is attacked on a cliffside by the same men he suspects killed his brother. But each act of violence, instead of silencing the town, starts to crack its collective paralysis.

When an unexpected witness finally decides to speak, the investigation turns into a trial that will test how far an entire community is willing to go to reclaim its voice — and reveal that justice and peace don't always arrive the same way for everyone.

GENRE AND CINEMATIC REFERENCES

The Call is a socially-rooted dramatic thriller with a rural neo-noir atmosphere. It is not an action thriller or a pure genre film: it is a story about the price of collective silence, with an investigative structure that serves as a vehicle to explore the mechanisms of fear, complicity, and redemption within a community.

Tonal and structural references

- **La isla mínima** (Alberto Rodríguez, 2014) — Spanish rural thriller, dark visual palette, closed community
- **Mystic River** (Clint Eastwood, 2003) — grief, collective guilt, the search for justice within a community
- **La Comunidad** (Álex de la Iglesia, 2000) — collective secret, Spanish social thriller, contained tension
- **21 Grams** (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2003) — coral structure, loss, fragmented truth
- **Prisoners** (Denis Villeneuve, 2013) — amateur investigation, moral ambiguity, justice vs. law
- **Nocturnal Animals** (Tom Ford, 2016) — neo-noir visual tone, rural landscape as latent threat

The Call shares with La isla mínima the use of the Andalusian landscape as an active dramatic element, and with La Comunidad the idea of a community that knows too much and stays silent by default. Its fundamental difference lies in its protagonist: not a professional detective, but a brother investigating from grief and helplessness.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The Call was born from a question that has stayed with me for years: what does it cost a community to stay silent? Not the silence of indifference, but the silence of fear — the kind that is passed down from generation to generation like an inheritance no one asked for and no one knows how to refuse.

I wanted to write a story set not in a city, but in a small town, because small towns make silence visible. Everyone knows everyone. Everyone knows what happened. And yet the machinery of fear — quiet, patient, invisible — keeps people from saying out loud what they already know to be true.

The Call is, on one level, a thriller about a brother trying to find justice for a death that was ruled an accident. But beneath that, it is a story about what happens when one person decides that silence is no longer an option — and how that single decision can, slowly and painfully, change everything around it.

I wrote this screenplay because I believe that stories about collective courage matter as much as stories about individual heroism. The real protagonist of *The Call* is not Álex. It is the moment when a community decides, after twenty years, to stop looking the other way.

MAIN CHARACTERS

ÁLEX — Protagonist

Lawyer, 32 years old. He has spent nearly a decade living in Barcelona, far from a town he never considered home. Fran's death brings him back to a world he had escaped, and forces him to become something he is not prepared for: an investigator, a spokesperson, and — for the first time — the older brother he should have been. His arc moves from denial to action, from helplessness to courage.

NORA — The Mother

Bar owner, 58 years old. A woman who has spent her entire life standing up to everyone and everything — including her own family. After Fran's death, the strength that always defined her becomes a burden. Her guilt, her grief, and her resistance are the emotional engine of the story.

FRAN — The Dead Brother

Law student, 20 years old. We only see him in Act I, but his presence dominates the entire screenplay. Luminous, athletic, with a sense of justice that led him to stand up to the wrong people. His death is the catalyst for everything.

NATALIA — Fran's Girlfriend

University student, 20 years old. She begins as a figure of grief and evolves into a key part of the investigation. Intelligent, determined, and emotionally stronger than she appears.

CRISTIAN — The Best Friend

University student, 21 years old. The character who changes most throughout the screenplay. His initial cowardice — he knew what was happening and did nothing — transforms into the bravest decision in the story when he chooses to testify.

MANÉ — Main Antagonist

Leader of the drug trafficking clan, 50 years old. Cold, calculating, with the quiet of someone who does not need to raise his voice to be obeyed. He is not a movie villain: he is the product of a system that has spent decades choosing not to see him.

KIKO — Secondary Antagonist

Mané's right-hand man, 32 years old. Impulsive, violent, incapable of thinking long-term. His disobedience towards Mané triggers the bar fire and, paradoxically, is what ends up breaking the town's silence.

SERGEANT RIVAS

Civil Guard officer, 55 years old. He has known the clan since childhood, has known the town his entire life, and has spent decades knowing what goes on without being able to do anything about it. He embodies the system trapped between what it knows and what it can prove.

PROPOSED CAST

The names listed below represent an indicative proposal of actor profiles suited to the spirit of each character. They do not imply any prior commitment or negotiation with the artists mentioned.

CHARACTER	PROFILE	PROPOSED ACTORS
ÁLEX	32, lawyer, emotionally contained	Óscar Casas
NORA	58, matriarch, strength and vulnerability	Carmen Maura / Aitana Sánchez-Gijón / Penélope Cruz / Naomi Watts
FRAN	20, luminous, athletic	Mario Casas / Miguel Herrán
NATALIA	20, intelligent, determined	Young Spanish actress to be confirmed
CRISTIAN	21, inner fragility, redeemed coward	Arón Piper
MANÉ	50, cold, natural authority	Álex González / Gonzalo Ramos
KIKO	32, impulsive, violent	Jaime Llorente / Arón Piper
SGT. RIVAS	55, veteran, pragmatic	Karra Elejalde / Imanol Arias

DIRECTORS ALIGNED WITH THE PROJECT

The directors listed below are references whose artistic vision and career trajectory are aligned with the spirit of *The Call*. They do not imply any prior commitment or negotiation.

Spanish and European Level

Álex de la Iglesia

La Comunidad (2000), *El día de la bestia* (1995), *Las brujas de Zugarramurdi* (2013)

The director most aligned with the DNA of *The Call*. His ability to build social tension in closed spaces and communities that keep collective secrets is exactly the territory of this screenplay.

Alejandro Amenábar

Thesis (1996), *The Others* (2001), *While at War* (2019)

A master of contained tension thrillers. His ability to build atmosphere without resorting to sensationalism makes him a natural reference for the tone of *The Call*.

Isabel Coixet

The Secret Life of Words (2005), *Elisa & Marcela* (2019), *It Snows in Benidorm* (2020)

Her sensitivity for intimate drama with social undercurrents and her ability to direct complex female characters make her a particularly well-suited option for Nora's arc.

Karra Elejalde

Imítateme (2005), *Año bisiesto* (2010)

Director with a dark, contained vision and deep knowledge of European social thriller.

Santiago Segura

Torrente (saga), *Padre no hay más que uno (saga)*

Versatile director with wide experience across different registers of Spanish cinema production.

International Level

Alejandro González Iñárritu

21 Grams (2003), *Babel* (2006), *Birdman* (2014), *The Revenant* (2015)

The coral structure of *The Call*, its exploration of grief and collective guilt, and its thematic references to *21 Grams* make Iñárritu the most natural international reference for this project.

Ridley Scott

Blade Runner (1982), *Thelma & Louise* (1991), *Matching Jack* (2010)

His mastery in building dark visual atmospheres and directing emotionally driven thrillers makes him a valid reference for the more cinematic dimension of this project.

LOCATIONS

The screenplay is set in a coastal town in contemporary Andalusia. The proposed locations are all within the province of Cádiz, which would facilitate production logistics and reduce crew transportation costs.

Primary Location — Rota (Cádiz)

A fishing port and coastal town with traditional Andalusian architecture, the atmosphere of a closed community, and an interesting duality between local life and the presence of the American-Spanish naval base — which adds a layer of external power coherent with the screenplay's themes. Its streets, market, and harbour are the natural setting for the everyday scenes of the story.

Secondary Locations

- **Conil de la Frontera (Cádiz)** — cliffs and night roads for the exterior tension scenes
- **Vejer de la Frontera (Cádiz)** — historic centre for the market and town street scenes

Interior Locations

- Nora's Bar — the central space of the story, built on set or adapted from a real location
- Civil Guard Post — real location in Rota or surroundings
- University — Act I sequences, locatable in Jerez de la Frontera or Cádiz city
- Courtroom — criminal court, locatable in Cádiz city
- Barcelona (Act I) — Álex's office, Álex's flat, urban avenue

ESTIMATED BUDGET

The figures presented below are an indicative estimate based on mid-range Spanish dramatic thriller productions. They do not constitute a definitive production budget.

LINE ITEM	ESTIMATED AMOUNT
Screenplay and rights	€80,000
Executive production and direction	€320,000
Principal and supporting cast	€700,000
Technical crew	€420,000
Production design, props and costume	€180,000
Locations and permits	€150,000

Camera and photography	€220,000
Direct sound and sound post-production	€160,000
Editing and post-production	€280,000
Original score	€120,000
Visual effects (minimal VFX)	€80,000
Marketing, distribution and festivals	€450,000
Insurance, contingencies (10%)	€340,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET	€3,500,000

Potential Funding Sources

- ICAA grants (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, Spain)
- Junta de Andalucía — Agencia Andaluza de Instituciones Culturales
- European Union MEDIA Programme (development and distribution)
- European co-production (France, Italy, Portugal)
- Television rights presale (RTVE, Canal Sur, streaming platforms)
- Andalusian tax rebate (20% tax deduction for productions shot in Andalusia)

PRODUCTION COMPANIES ALIGNED WITH THE PROJECT

Spanish Production Companies

Mod Producciones

La isla mínima (2014), El reino (2018), La trinchera infinita (2019)

The Spanish production company most aligned with the DNA of *The Call*. Their specialisation in social thriller with Andalusian settings and their experience with narratives about institutional corruption and collective complicity make them the natural first option for this project.

Películas Pendelton

Production company of Álex de la Iglesia

Direct connection to the director most aligned with the spirit of *The Call*.

Nostromo Pictures

The Orphanage (2007), The Impossible (2012)

Production company with extensive experience in dramatic thriller with international ambition and co-productions with English-speaking markets.

Ikiru Films

Truman (2015), The Author (2017)

Specialised in auteur drama with international projection. Their profile aligns with the contained, literary tone of *The Call*.

International Production Companies

Pathé Films (France)

Regular co-productions with Spain. Distribution across European markets.

Consistent interest in European social thriller with peripheral settings. A natural co-producer for an international version of the project.

Protagonist Pictures (United Kingdom)

Specialised in European auteur thriller for English-speaking markets.

Their catalogue of independent European dramatic thriller aligns directly with the profile of *The Call*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fernando Gracia Ortuño is a novelist and screenwriter based in Barcelona, member of the Guionistes Associats de Catalunya (GAC) and registered with SGAE. He is the author of three published novels — *Un detective en la cocina* (MTM Ediciones), *La rebelión de las lentejas* (La equilibrista editorial) and *Rehenes del Abismo* (Editorial Distrito 93, 2020) — and two short story collections: *Holocausto animal* (Editorial Carena) and *El mote y otros relatos satíricos* (Ediciones Oblicuas).

Rehenes del Abismo became the basis for his first feature-length screenplay of the same title — a dystopian noir thriller set in a near-future Barcelona under single-party authoritarian rule, which has achieved recognition across more than ten international festivals and competitions, including six awards at the Caravan International Film Festival, a Finalist placement at the Chicago Script Awards (among 48 finalists worldwide), two awards at the Art Film Awards (Best Screenplay and Best Movie Poster), an Official Selection at the Swedish International Film Festival, and an Official Selection at the World Class Film Awards (Milan) in three categories. Blastoff Screenplay Competition (Los Angeles) rated the script 8/10, with Festival Director Rowan Sutherland, M.F.A. (Screenwriting/Film), describing it as "*An irresistible screenplay.*"

The Call is his second feature-length screenplay, the result of a rigorous and iterative writing process, with multiple editorial passes and documented dramaturgical development. The screenplay is registered with Safe Creative with a certified SHA-256 hash.

FilmFreeway profile: **filmfreeway.com/profile/FernandoGracia**