



MORRICONE

Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down! (Átame!)

Almodóvar's very dark romantic comedy concerns a troubled man who kidnaps an actress in the belief that they are destined to be together. An imaginative contemporary variation on the *Beauty and the Beast* story, the film is seen by some as one of Almodóvar's most romantic works. Morricone channelled Herrmann's *Psycho* for his score.

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A contemporary review

Taking the abduction plot that often motivates modern Gothic horror (*The Collector*, *Fanatic*, *Misery*), in which characters are penned up in isolated apartments much as eighteenth-century heroines were confined to unholy convents or haunted castles, Almodóvar here turns out a bizarre love story. The put-upon Marina – who has already overcome the stigmas of heroin addiction and porno stardom when the story begins – gradually, without apparent irony, comes to love a man who ties and gags her whenever he goes out. The plot reversal typical of screwball romance – from *Bringing Up Baby* and *Pillow Talk* to *When Harry Met Sally...* – whereby a pursued partner finds hate turning to love, is always sticky, and *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* does not handle it well, despite a fairly impressive sex scene reflected in the ceiling's multiple mirrors. The protracted finale, with its contrived suspense quirks and awkward plot hiccup as everyone suddenly goes to the country, also fails to sustain the suspension of disbelief. The long, effective take in the car on the way home, as Lola and Ricky establish a rapport by singing along to a song he has been listening to on the Walkman he has earlier stolen from her, only gives the viewer time to wonder how long Marina's idyll with the unstable Ricky will last beyond the happy fade-out. He may have demonstrated his virtues by meticulously shopping for the most comfortable gag money can buy, and furthermore proved the answer to any woman's prayers by being able to fix a perished tap washer, but Ricky is still a psychotic given to casually beating up women.

However, credibility has never been a major concern in melodrama, and this, despite its primary-coloured comedy, is essentially an attempt to fuse the battle-of-the-sexes romance with psycho horror. The film-within-the-film, *Midnight Phantom*, in which the girl lassos a scarred muscle man with a telephone cord, is an amusing skit on the Mario Bava-Dario Argento style of cosmopolitan Continental splatter, with Ennio Morricone providing a wittily ominous score that recalls his work on 60s *gialli*, while the sequences detailing Ricky's obsessive quirkiness are reminiscent of Spanish precedents such as *Bell of Hell* and *Apartment on the 13th Floor*. Several of the straight Hitchcockian suspense sequences – the intercutting of Marina's half-hearted escape attempt with Ricky's pursuit by the drug dealer, in particular – are impressively mounted, and the early scenes between Victoria Abril, who is edgily marvellous throughout, and the brooding Antonio Banderas, have a nice uneasiness as she sullenly falls back on drugs and he subtly realises that this won't be a simple kidnapping after all.

As with *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, the plot has as many contrivances and coincidences as a classic farce, but here the references are more to the thriller. Given the prevalence of the bondage theme, which has brought the film into ratings troubles in the U.S., Almodóvar surprisingly has refrained from exploiting the fetish in the way that a Hitchcock or an Argento might, reserving his regulation sleaziness for a funny little scene in which Marina plays erotically in the bath with a toy frogman, and rigorously refusing to give any erotic charge to the ropes and gags Ricky uses to keep Marina under control. More surprising, perhaps, is the refusal to make anything of the notion of ‘the ties that bind’, as Ricky’s idea of a perfect marriage, in which he ‘takes care’ of Marina and she has lots of children, is never explicitly equated with his desire to control her physically. Given that Almodóvar, with his habitual distancing, is unlikely to be endorsing Ricky’s idea of women in general and Marina in particular, it is odd that the plot bears the character out without ever providing any explicit criticism of the outmoded and dangerous ideas he represents. The film would be less uncomfortable if Ricky were admirable in the beginning and psychotic at the end, but comfort, perhaps, is beside the point.

Kim Newman, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, July 1990

TIE ME UP! TIE ME DOWN! (ÁTAME!)

Director: Pedro Almodóvar

Production Company: El Deseo

With financial assistance from: Ministerio de Cultura

Executive Producer: Agustín Almodóvar

Production Manager: Esther García

Production Assistants: Juan Manuel Sánchez, Tino Pont,

Miguel de Casas, Esther Rodríguez

Assistant Directors: José Luis Escolar, Raul De La Morena

Extras Casting: Nueva Agencia

Screenplay: Pedro Almodóvar

Director of Photography: José Luis Alcaine

Camera Operator: Alfredo Mayo

Video Transfers: Atanor

Special Effects: Reyes Abades

Graphic Design: Studio Gatti

Additional Graphic Design: Juli Capella, Quim, Larrea Disseny

Editor: José Salcedo

Set Decorators: Ferrán Sanchez, Carlo García Cambero, Arturo González

Costume Designer: José María de Cossío

Wardrobe: Peris Hermanos

Make-up: Juan Pedro Hernández

Prosthetics: Viuda de Ruiz

Titles: Optical Film Effects

Titles Layout: Story Film/Pablo Nuñez

Music: Ennio Morricone

Sound Recording: Goldstein & Steinberg

Sound Re-recording: Alfonso Pino

Spain Sound Re-recording: Francisco Peramos

London Sound Re-recording: Graham V. Hartstone, Michael A. Carter,

Kevin Taylor

Sound Transfers: Dacasound

Foley Recordist: Luis Castro

Stunt Co-ordinators: Alejandro Cobo, Andres Parra

Armourer: José L.M. Chinchilla

Livestock: Francisco Ardura

Cast

Victoria Abril (*Marina*)

Antonio Banderas (*Ricki*)

Francisco Rabal (*Maximo Espejo*)

Loles León (*Lola*)

Julieta Serrano (*Alma*)

María Barranco (*Berta*)

Rosy de Palma (*bike girl*)

Lola Cardona (*director psychiatric ward*)

Montse G. Romeu (*journalist*)

Emiliano Redondo (*set decorator*)

Oswaldo Delgado (*midnight phantom*)

Concha Rabal (*drugstore attendant*)

Alberto Fernández (*film producer*)

José María Tasso (*old man in ward*)

Angelina Llongueras (*editor*)

Manuel Bandera, Virginia Díez (*tango dancers*)

Juana Cordero (*candy shop attendant*)

Francisca Caballero (*Marina's mother*)

Francisca Pajuela (*Lola's daughter*)

Victor Aparicio, Carlo García Cambero (*Lola's brothers*)

Tamaki (*black man*)

Almudena García (*nurse*)

Agustín Almodóvar (*drug store attendant*)

Rodolfo Montero (*guard*)

Miguel García (*old gypsy*)

Pedro Losada (*young gypsy*)

Spain 1989

101 mins

MORRICONE

The Battle of Algiers (La battaglia di Algeri)

Sun 1 Aug 15:10; Wed 25 Aug 14:30

A Fistful of Dollars (Per un pugno di dollari)

Mon 2 Aug 20:45; Sat 7 Aug 11:30; Tue 10 Aug 20:50; Mon 30 12:20

Two Mules for Sister Sara

Wed 4 Aug 18:00; Sat 21 Aug 20:30

Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom (Salò o Le 120 giornate di Sodoma)

Thu 5 Aug 20:45; Tue 10 Aug 17:45; Wed 25 Aug 17:50

The Untouchables

Fri 6 Aug 17:45; Tue 24 Aug 14:30

The Thing

Fri 6 Aug 20:50; Tue 24 Aug 20:50

For a Few Dollars More (Per qualche dollaro in più)

Sat 7 Aug 14:00; Sun 22 Aug 12:10; Mon 30 Aug 15:00

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo)

Sat 7 Aug 17:10; Sun 29 Aug 18:20; Mon 30 Aug 18:15

White Dog

Sat 7 Aug 20:50; Fri 20 Aug 18:10; Fri 27 Aug 20:45

Once upon a Time in the West (C'era una volta il west)

Sun 8 Aug 12:00; Fri 27 Aug 14:00; Tue 31 Aug 14:00

The Mission

Sun 8 Aug 15:10; Thu 12 Aug 20:30; Thu 26 Aug 18:00

Days of Heaven

Mon 9 Aug 21:00; Tue 31 Aug 17:50

Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down (Atame!)

Wed 11 Aug 20:50; Thu 19 Aug 14:15; Mon 23 Aug 21:00;

Tue 31 Aug 20:45

The Hateful Eight

Sun 15 Aug 15:00; Sun 22 Aug 18:00

Once upon a Time in America

Tue 17 Aug 17:40; Sat 28 Aug 11:20

The Legend of 1900 (La leggenda del pianista sull'oceano)

Sat 21 Aug 11:50; Sun 29 Aug 15:10

Cinema Paradiso (Nuovo Cinema Paradiso)

Sat 21 Aug 14:30; Thu 26 Aug 14:30

Promotional partner



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