

# HOT SUR

By

Laura Restrepo

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# GENERAL INFORMATION

**TOPICS:** Murder, Immigration, Racism, Arms Trafficking, Corruption, Overcoming, Poverty, Business, Police, Search for the Truth, Jail, Sentence, Justice, Social Promotion.

**GENRE:** Thriller, Drama.

**RELEVANT INFORMATION:** Highly acclaimed by the critics all throughout the world, *Hot Sur* has been translated into English and Portuguese, becoming one of Laura Restrepo's most outstanding literary projects.

One of the most highlighting aspects of the novel is the evolution of its characters, besides the complexity of their psychological construction. In spite of the rawness of the plot, Laura Restrepo manages to include touches of humour that contribute to the majestic creation of this original and unique masterpiece.

# HOT SUR

# LAURA

# RESTREPO

**3** *Translated by Ernesto Mestre-Reed*

# PRESS

“Her powerful writing takes us back to the great passionate literature obsessed with accurate historical details of the greatest Latin-American fiction”. – *New York Times Book Review*

“Her fascination for popular culture and her sense of humor avoid any kind of melodrama, which make us enjoy her novels endlessly”. – *Gabriel García Márquez*

“When the writing level reaches what Laura Restrepo does, I have to take my hat off to her”.

– *José Saramago*

“*Hot Sur* is a terrifying and sad mosaic of the price of dreams in the contemporary world...but as much a celebration of life with the tempo of a thriller as a novel excoriating systems that erect walls to the detriment of millions of immigrants”. – *Babelia*

“Restrepo reminds us that sometimes paradise can be found in hell. Or, in this particular case: hell, in paradise.

The author has conjured up just such a world in *Hot Sur* through the physical and emotional ordeals of those who leave their places of origin behind in search of better opportunities. Her point of departure was the case of Javier, a man serving a life sentence in a U.S. prison, but in her novel it's the story of María Paz, who goes after the American dream, which can be extrapolated to Europe as well.” – *El País*

“Restrepo's newest work deals with the perils and shattered hopes of the immigrant journey...HOT SUR [Hot South] carries a disturbing dedication: “To Javier, who spends the days of his life in a U.S. jail.” That's a pretty blunt and compelling way of opening a book. But if you're familiar with Restrepo's previous novels, several of which have been published in English...you know that she specializes in hooking readers from the first page with dramatic set-ups that could've been lifted from a crime thriller or a telenovela. Then her taut, nuanced, ironic narratives quickly reel you in to confront the starkest and darkest of current realities: warfare, drug violence, desperate urban poverty, the embattled and fragmented modern Self.” – *Reed Johnson, Los Angeles Times*



# THE AUTHOR

**Laura Restrepo** is a Colombian writer and journalist, internationally acclaimed by the critics, and considered one of the great voices of the current Latin-American literature. She started writing when she was 9, and built up her literary career inspired by John Steinbeck, Nikos Krantzakis, William Saroyan, and Gabriel García Márquez, with whom she had a close relationship.

Graduated in Philosophy and Literature, she is a professor at Cornell University in the United States, and collaborates in one of the most important Spanish newspapers, *El País*.

Her novels have been translated into more than 20 languages, and has received many prestigious awards in the USA, Spain, France and Italy, such as the **Premio Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz**, **Prix France Culture**, **Premio Alfaguara** and the **National Literature Prize of Colombia**, among others.

# SYNOPSIS

## *A NIGHTMARE CALLED "THE AMERICAN DREAM"*

María Paz is a Colombian immigrant in her 20s who arrived in the US searching for the American dream. Instead, she found a nation that rejected immigration, a country in which liberty was just for the fittest, a place in where she was definitely not welcomed.

Years later, María Paz is sent to prison falsely accused of the murder of her husband Greg, a white police inspector who (along with some other colleagues of the police station) was involved in arms trafficking. María Paz, despite being already legal in the States, cannot escape her condition as an immigrant and is imprisoned for being the main suspect of the crime. However, when her loyal attorney proves her innocent, she remains in jail, again, falsely accused of being involved in the arms trafficking deals of her husband.

In jail, María Paz attends a course in literary creativity, imparted by Cleve Rose. She will start writing her memoirs as an immigrant in an American prison. Cleve Rose, who lives a very peaceful life, dies in an what seems motorbike accident (which in actual fact is a homicide). However, his father, Ian Rose, will take justice into his own hands and start investigating the truth behind his son's death. Ian and María will cross paths when the manuscript written by the María is given to Ian, and he realizes that María knew Cleve very well and might help him find out what happened to his son.

María suffers the harassment of her brother-in-law, Sleepy Joe, a cruel killer that anxiously looks for the money that Greg had earned with his illegal arms trafficking business. Sleepy Joe is involved in a series of crimes. His strong ultra-religious believes are a way for him to sacrifice his victims through bloody biblical rituals.

Many diverse characters will cross their paths in this frenetic and adventurous thriller in which comical and dramatic elements merge to create an original and unique story that has captivated thousands of readers all over the world.



# MAIN CHARACTERS



**María Paz** is a Colombian immigrant who has been living in the United States for years. In order to become a legal US citizen, she married a white police officer of Slovak descent who is involved in arms trafficking.

Her husband is brutally murdered for his arms trafficking dealings and María Paz, falsely accused of the crime, is imprisoned in Manninpox jail.

She had an affair with her brother-in-law, Sleepy Joe, and she now has to suffer his constant harassment. She is afraid of him, as Sleepy Joe is a mentally unstable killer.

In jail, she will fall in love with Cleve Rose, her literature teacher who encourages her to write her memoirs. However, she will have to overcome his death in a motorbike accident.

She cares for her younger sister, Violeta, who is interned in a special needs school due to her autism. Violeta is María's main pillar.

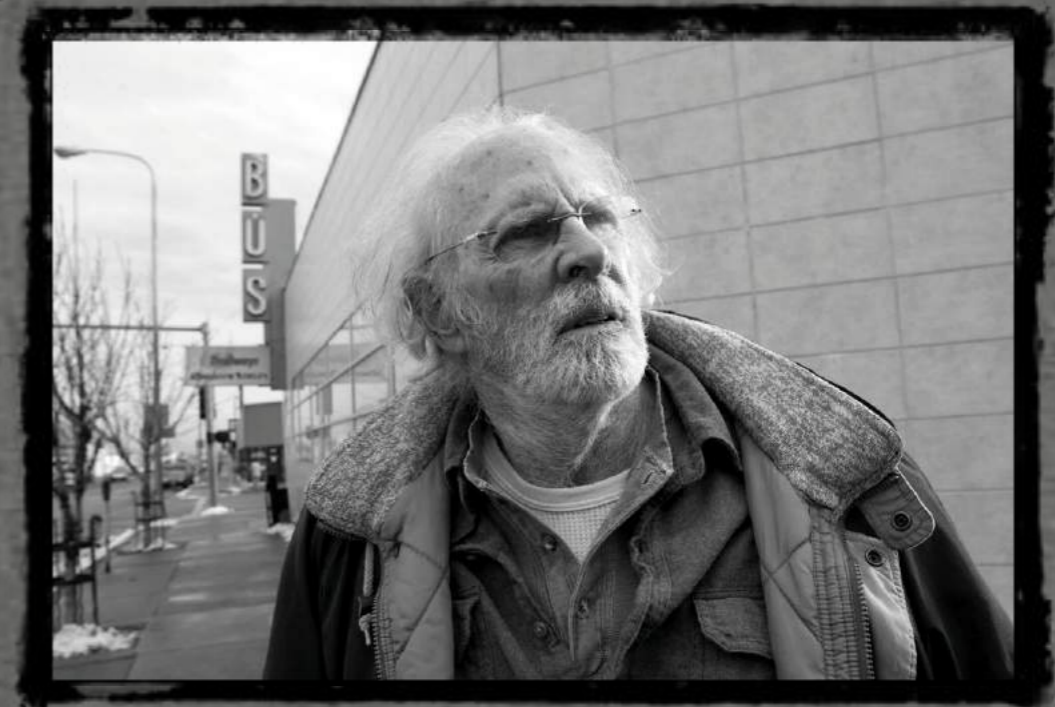




# MAIN CHARACTERS

**Ian Rose** is Cleve's father. He is intensely affected by the loss of his son, he now has nervous twitches and his physical appearance has deteriorated since. He tries to investigate why would anyone kill a man with such a peaceful life such as his son had.

His objective is to find his son's murderer. His search will begin when he receives the manuscript of María Paz's memoirs. After reading it, Ian realizes that María Paz knew Cleve very well, and she might help him find out who is behind this unexpected crime.



# MAIN CHARACTERS

- **Greg** is María Paz's husband and Sleepy Joe's brother. He is a corrupt police officer who, along with his colleagues, manages an arms trafficking network. However, his "successful" life takes the wrong turn when he is brutally murdered.
- **Cleve Rose** is a graphic novelist who works as creative literature teacher at the Manninpox jail. He falls in love with María Paz, and encourages her to start writing her memoirs. He dies in a motorbike "accident", which turns out to be a homicide.
- **Sleepy Joe** is Greg's brother and María Paz's lover. His strong religious beliefs, ingrained by his mother when he was a child, lead him to a complete mental instability and to commit all sort of atrocities to young women. To murder his victims, he follows a series of biblical rituals such as crucifixions and tortures.

# LOCATIONS

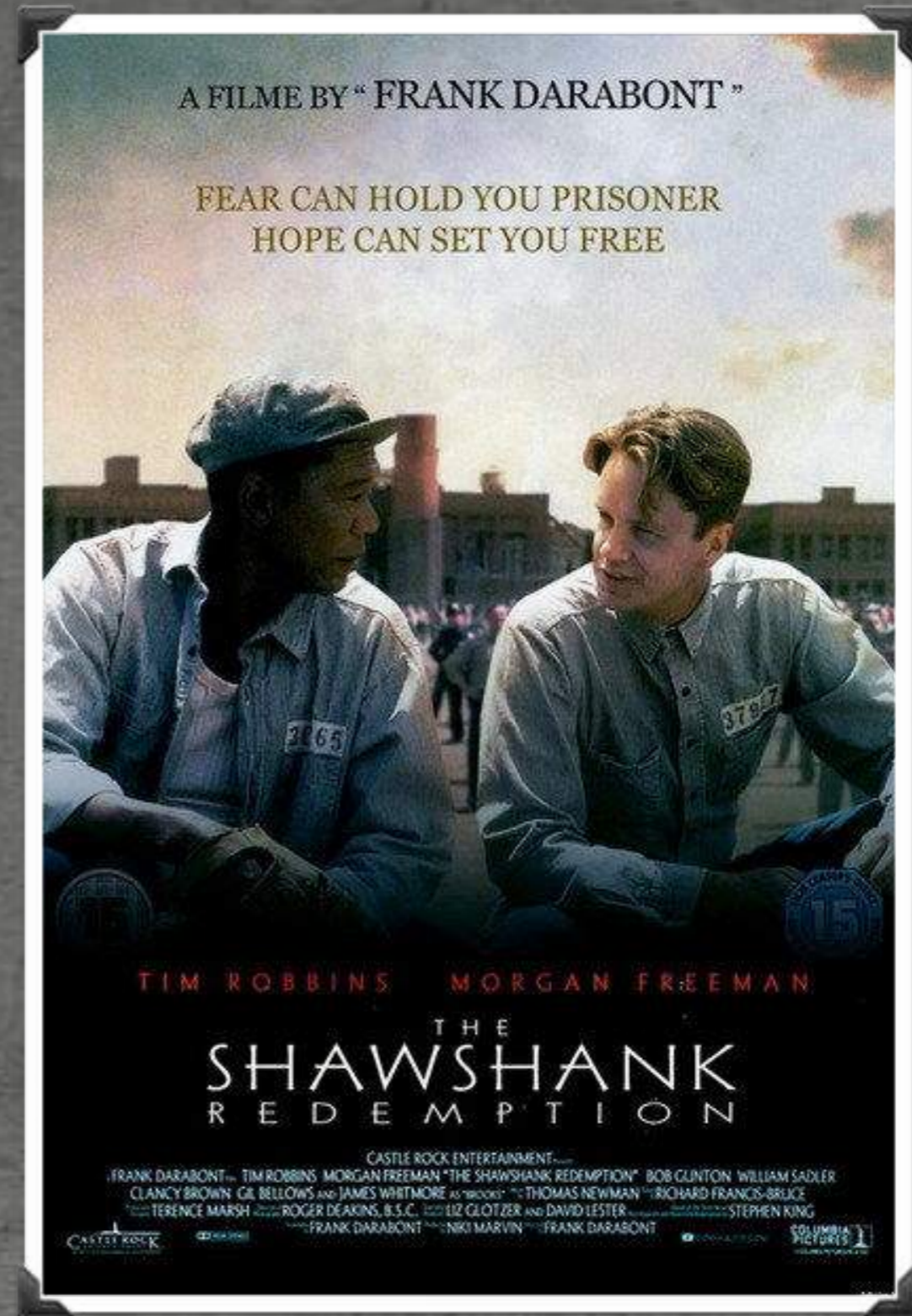
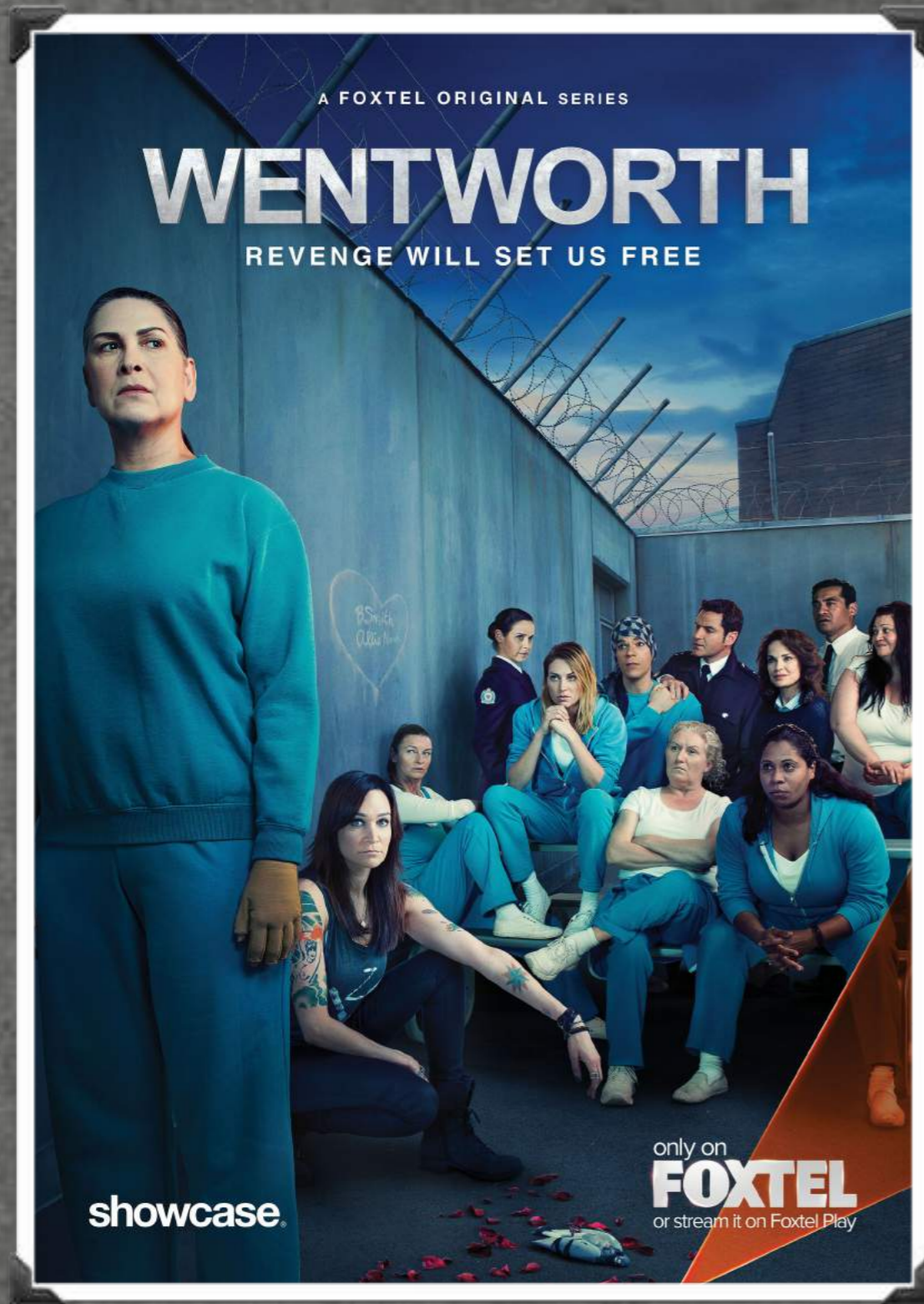
The plot takes place in contemporary USA, mostly in the state of New York.

There are some passages in the Canadian border and in some central states, like Colorado.

Something to be taken into account is the fact that most of the plot takes place in interior spaces, such as the Manninpox jail, where María Paz is imprisoned; Cleve and Ian's home; or some strip-clubs and pubs.



# REFERENCES



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