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# AMOR BANDIDO

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(ANALYSIS)

Color/1.85

115 Mins.

Cast: Paulo Gracindo, Cristina Ache, Paulo Guarnieri, Ligia Diniz, Flavio Sao Thiago, Helio Ary, Vinicius Salvatori, Jose Dumont, Roberto Husbands.

Credits: Directed by Bruno Barreto; Screenplay by Leopoldo Serran; Original story by Jose Louzeiro and Leopoldo Serran; Produced by Luiz Carlos Barreto; Executive Producer, Lucy Barreto; Photography by Lauro Escorel Filho, Music by Guto Graca Mello

**Seedy, violent true-life melodrama about a young prostitute, her detective father and her gay hustler boyfriend who murders taxi drivers for a living. Unrelenting grit but dramatically ineffective. Slim chances. 82-180**

Like the earlier import *Pixote*, *Amor Bandido* dredges the raw South American underworld of pimps, hustlers, and whores and comes up with a grim tale of parasitic love and casual murder.

Set in Rio's Copacabana, a densely populated crime-ridden beachfront area, pic centers around a young prostitute, Sandra (Cristina Ache) who dances in a cheap nightclub. She was disowned at an early age by her father (Paul Gracindo), a police detective who is now a widower, searching for his daughter seeking to redress his wrongs. Sandra meets Toninho (Paulo Guarnieri) a very young hustler and pimp and they dive into a relationship characterized by frequent quarrels, mutual dependence and sex, sex, sex. Toninho's



Cristina Ache in *Amor Bandido*.

money supply is a mystery until he finally brings Sandra out on one of his "jobs": he murders taxi drivers and robs them without remorse.

Initially, Sandra is shocked and tries to disentangle herself from this sickie, but he haunts her and she ends up protecting him from the intensive search the police (led by her father) are conducting for the infamous 'murderer after midnight'. A witness' description of the killer leads Sandra's father to realize that the murderer is living with his daughter. Confronted by her father, she refused to cooperate until his fellow police beat a confession out of her. The police stake-out the nightclub where Sandra works, and finally capture the *Amor Bandido* and shoot him in front of Sandra. The film ends with a shattered Sandra watching a janitor mop up Toninho's blood.

Director Bruno Barreto has concocted a peculiar mixture of realism and superficial melodrama resulting in an existential statement that never hits home. Though the actors are undeniably talented, the characters lack depth and their actions lack impact. Thus, throughout this incursion into an amoral corrupt world, the viewer remains unaffected. Side trips into the numerous sex scenes showing lots of skin but no real intimacy only serve to diffuse whatever intensity has been building. The consequence is a choppy, one-dimensional account of horrifying actions which are seen, not felt. Like its view of the world, the outlook for this Brazilian tragedy is quite bleak.

—Joe Henson