



**BORDERLINES
FILM FESTIVAL**

THE DELINQUENTS (12A)

Director: Rodrigo Moreno

Starring: Daniel Elias, Esteban Bigliardi, Margarita Molino

Argentina, 2024, 3 hours 9 minutes, Spanish + English subtitles

Bold, brave and beguiling cinema. Morán (Daniel Elias) is a clerk in a Buenos Aires bank. He is dull, invisible to his colleagues. Over a stand up dinner with Román (Esteban Bigliardi), Morán informs his friend that he just stole \$650,000. He plans to turn himself in, but not before offering Román to split the money if he agrees to hide it for the duration of his incarceration.

From that point on a dead-pan heist comedy spirals out of control... or very nearly. It certainly has its own path to tread.

"The seriocomic taste of this film has to be savoured, like some little-known fortified wine" **Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian**

This unlikely adventure spins out into interwoven and apparently unrelated stories. But at its heart there is a curiosity and compassion for the other briefly-met people in any of our days. They also have intense inner lives, and the ability to rewrite their own identities.

Nothing quite runs as expected. Román, left on the outside, is watched and accused of being an accomplice, to the point where his freedom is more compromised than Morán's life inside. After a rough beginning he learns and adapts, settling into reading and contemplating a richer future.

"This film is a part of what Jorge Luis Borges called the "noble tradition of thieves". In *The Argentinian Writer and Tradition* (1951) Borges puts the idea ... 'due to Argentina's geographical position, those who write here—one could also say, those who film—are so curious about what has been said and discovered in other latitudes that they try out all the distant signs until they transform them into their own alphabet, with which they invent, imagine, and create... this kind of thieving is stealing many things at the same time and immediately interweaving them to compose something new.'" **Roger Koza, Notebook, 2023**

Moreno is very aware he is part of the Argentinian tradition of storytelling and of thievery. He openly quotes from Robert Bresson's *L'Argent*, while emulating that master's camera, calmly surveying an absurd world.

Prison time and time outside cease to function in accepted ways. There is no limit inside, and Román, restless outside, escapes to the mountains, where love lies in wait. This is a beautifully shot and constructed film, compassionate and funny. With a sound track increasingly dominated by legendary Argentinian guitarist Pappo, who's lyrics synthesis the whole film into one line, 'Where is freedom?'

Notes compiled by Matthew Evans

Preview courtesy of MUBI