

THE NEGOTIATORS

LOS NEGOCIADORES

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
George Santayana



TRANSMEDIA DOCUMENTARY PROJECT

Bogotá, January 2017



1. Introduction

The real revolution in Colombia is to sit down and dialogue with an enemy rather than exchange bullets. War has been a constant in Colombia since its beginnings.

For the last half-century, the conservative and pro-capitalist Colombian State, with the highest rates of inequality in the region, has been engaged in an internal conflict, principally with the Marxist FARC guerrillas, resulting in more than 7 million victims including killed, displaced, kidnapped, and disappeared.

There have been four attempts to reach a negotiated solution to the conflict. The most-recent previous attempt was in 1999-2002, a time when Colombians were hopeful for a solution. The failure of this peace process was attributed to the actions of the FARC, which took advantage of reduced tensions to strengthen themselves militarily. The negotiations became politically unpopular, and after the following elections, right-wing President Álvaro Uribe took power and with the help of US funding, greatly increased the size of the Armed Forces and dealt the FARC a series of strategically important military defeats.

In this political context where negotiations did not seem to be on the national agenda, the government of the next president, Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018), started a secret dialogue with the FARC to determine if they had the will to engage in public negotiations that would lead to the end of the decades-long war.

In 2010-2011, secret meetings with the FARC started in Colombia, and in February 2012, face-to-face negotiations between the warring parties began in Cuba, still out of the public eye.

In August 2012, President Santos announced to a surprised country that public negotiations with the FARC were about to start in Havana, and that delegations representing the two sides had already agreed on a six-point agenda.

This announcement was met with fierce opposition from Santos's popular predecessor Álvaro Uribe, who considered the rebels nothing more than terrorists who should be killed or imprisoned rather than recognized and negotiated with.

I started travelling to Havana to cover the negotiations in 2014.



At first, it was very difficult for me to get access, and I came home almost empty-handed from my first trip. But I gradually gained acceptance, first with the government and finally with the guerrilla commanders. For a long time, my coverage was limited to interviews, but in the last months of the negotiations, I was finally able to film the delegations in action. After an agreement for a permanent cease-fire was signed in June 2016, trust between the parties was strong and the mood of all was high. It seemed that the war was over.

Over the course of those months I filmed the delegations working together, examining documents, talking, and sometimes smiling. I have a few shots of the most senior active general at the negotiations working at a computer with a top member of the FARC in a most constructive and civilized way. I also filmed the fiercest retired general laughing with one of his former worst enemies.

The official signing ceremony was held in Cartagena, with the attendance of thirteen Latin American presidents, John Kerry, Ban Ki Moon, and others. But on the following Sunday, there was to be a plebiscite on the agreement in Colombia. The polls, apparently wrong this year in many parts of the world, predicted that the Yes campaign was going to win. But in a dramatic and unexpected result that stunned the country and the world, the No campaign won by a razor-thin margin.

Supporters of the Yes campaign felt into a collective depression. I filmed the crying of young people in Bogotá and silent marches for peace in the country's principal plaza.

Despite the inflamed and even hateful nature of the pre-plebiscite debate, the government and the political opposition sat down to negotiate conditions for a new peace agreement on the very next day. In a historic gesture, former president Álvaro Uribe went to the presidential palace and shook hands with President Santos as negotiations for changes to the peace agreement already signed with the FARC were about to begin. Nevertheless, there was a general foreboding in the capital that the country could return to war.

The president was greatly weakened after his embarrassing defeat in the plebiscite, but a remarkable series of events led to a second Agreement. Santos was announced as the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize on October 7. A revised agreement with the FARC was signed on November 24, after negotiations first between the government and the opposition and then between the government and the FARC; and Santos received the Peace Prize on December 13.



At the time of this writing, guerrilla troops are walking and travelling by boat, Jeep, and bus to areas of concentration, where, after more than half a century of war, they will give up their weapons.

“Today we are taking an enormous step towards that new Colombia and I invite us all to build it together. From the side of our institutions, I want to express my appreciation for the step that the FARC has taken today. They are adversaries and we are on opposite sides, but we are heading together in the same direction, which is towards peace.”

President Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia, in Havana, 9/23/15.

“This peace process is the only one in the world where we have reached agreement on a comprehensive system that includes and integrates all the elements called for under international law: truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition.”

FARC Commander-in-Chief Rodrigo Londoño, known as *Timochenko*, Havana: 9/23/15.

Colombia is now immersed in a complex political process, and its society is divided between those who wish to forgive transgressions and those who cannot forget them; those who look to the future, and those who are trapped in the past. The intense dialogue and peace negotiations between the government of President Santos and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia lasted four years. The objective of this peace process, which was initiated in Oslo and carried out in Havana, was to put an end to the war between the State and the rebel group.

But Colombia has two faces. On the one hand it is an open and exuberant country of great natural beauty and beautiful people. But a second face lurks underneath, invisible but ever-present, of current and past horror. In fact, beauty and horror are two components of a unique panorama that historians have called the "Colombian singularity."

2. Idea

To develop a transmedia documentary project about the armed conflict in Colombia and the peace process in Havana between 2012 and 2016.

3. Description

Design and execute a transmedia documentary about the Colombian armed conflict and the peace process in Havana between 2012 and 2016. The use of multiple media and communicative platforms to present a non-fiction narrative, gradually and incrementally explaining the nature of the Colombian conflict from its origins to the present, including



three unsuccessful attempts to reach peace, up to the present relative stability and a fourth agreement signed by both sides.

We propose to recount the history of the conflict beginning with a historical timeline from the earliest stage of the armed conflict in 1964 through the key events of following decades. Second, we envision a linear documentary of a little under two hours that follows the progress of the peace negotiations in Havana in 2012-2016. Third, an interactive documentary will allow for a conversation with the different parties to the conflict, provide content to users, and offer them a set of in-depth interviews regarding the most closely guarded secrets of the peace negotiations. Then, users will be invited to participate more actively through social networks where victims will contribute to a participatory forum. Finally, to increase visibility and raise consciousness about the Colombian experience, all the documentary content collected will be made available for classroom use in an educational project with guided viewings for groups all around Colombia.

4. Goals

The following are the three key goals of the project:

- To offer current and future generations a realistic and even-handed transmedia narrative of the Colombian peace process promoted by President Santos.
- To produce an audiovisual and transmedia project that will help reinforce the peace process by educating viewers about the conflict's origins and evolution, the terrible suffering that it brought, efforts at reconciliation, and the participation of the warring parties in peace talks.
- To create a platform for an interactive conversation in which the voices of all who have been involved in the conflict and in its resolution can be heard and will feel represented.

5. Target Audience

The target audience of this project is aged 15 years and above. It is principally directed at young people as a tool to understand the peace process and what has happened in Colombia over the last several decades, but it is also directed at older people whose voices were silenced during that period of time and who may find in the project a useful way to be represented in the solution of the conflict, and may use it as an opportunity to add their testimony to the public record in the hope that such tragic events will never be repeated.

6. Audiovisual and Interactive Referents

Like Colombian journalism and literature, the Colombian audiovisual industry has produced numerous works in many genres on the history of the armed conflict. A recent sampling includes full-length fiction such as *Sumas y restas* (V́ctor Gaviria, 2005) and *Postales Colombianas* (Ricardo Coral Dorado, 2011); *La Sierra* (Scott Dalton & Margarita Martınez 2006 - Colombia's most widely seen documentary), *Los hipopótamos de Pablo* (Antonio von Hildebrand, 2011); and television series such as *Rosario Tijeras* (2010, 60 chapters produced by Teleset), and *Narcos* (2015, produced by Netflix); as well as works of interactive nonfiction such as *Cuentos de viejos* (Hierro Animación, Piaggiodematei and Señal Colombia, 2013) or *Arıos* (Elder Manuel Tobar, Orgánica Digital, ongoing).

7. Information Architecture

To illustrate the different platforms of the project and their execution over time, we use three schematic presentations in this section: (1) project media and platforms, (2) a timeline of media and platforms used, and (3) a three-phase timeline for the development of the transmedia project.

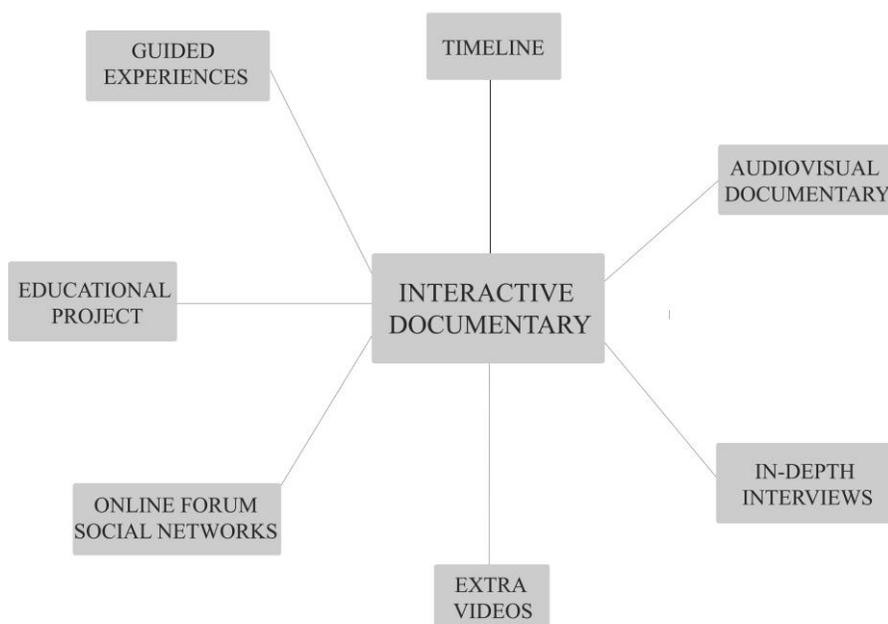


Figure 1. Schematic presentation of the project's media and platforms



Below we list and describe the different platforms that make up the project's transmedia ecosystem:

– **Presentation Web Site** (starting point for the transmedia experience)

A web site that offers two modes of navigation:

a) Free navigation: one of the functions of this web site is to present the different project platforms, each accessible through a clickable menu in a central location. The user can enter and explore any of the different proposed platforms: timeline, linear documentary, interactive documentary, educational project, and in-depth content.

b) Predetermined order: For users less familiar with the topic, this is the recommended order that can be used to follow platforms for understanding the relevant history:

7.1 – Timeline

7.2 – Linear documentary

7.3 – Interactive documentary

7.4 – Videos of in-depth interviews

7.5 – Social networks – online discussion

7.6 – Ancillary materials

7.7 – Educational project

7.8 – Collective visions and guided experiences

Below we describe the different media and platforms:

7.1 – Timeline

The timeline should include significant moments in the history of the Colombian guerrillas with an emphasis on the three previous unsuccessful peace processes with the FARC. This timeline may also include animations to reconstruct historical events, particularly regarding the three unsuccessful peace processes with the guerrillas.

- Interaction: Active users navigate the timeline.

- Goal of this level: To learn about and contextualize the conflict before the current peace process, i.e. in the period 1964-2012.



7.2 – Linear Documentary

In Colombia, it is revolutionary to sit down to talk rather than exchange bullets. *The Negotiators* tells the story of the dialogue that ended the oldest war in the Western Hemisphere and the story of the FARC, one of the world's oldest guerrilla groups.

After 52 years of war, three previous attempts at negotiations, and 8 million victims including killed, displaced, kidnapped, and disappeared, the Colombian government and the FARC reached a peace agreement in late 2016.

Margarita Martínez had unprecedented access to the long and complex negotiations between the warring parties that ended the long Colombian war. The conservative, pro-capitalist Colombian government and the Marxist FARC guerrillas negotiated for four years in Havana, Cuba, before reaching an agreement.

The linear component follows the Havana peace negotiations over the course of those four years. When the documentary will be available on the Web (after being presented at festivals and movie theaters), users will be able to synchronize certain scenes with the timeline (1) and with videos of in-depth interviews (4).

- Interaction: The passive user watches the documentary.

- Goal of this level: To learn about and understand the key moments during the 2012-2016 peace negotiations that took place principally in Havana.

7.3 – Interactive documentary (centerpiece of the transmedia experience)

This third level allows for an active conversation between the user and the parties involved in the conflict. The user plays the role of an intermediary between the warring parties and a witness to testimony provided by victims of the conflict. We attempt to re-create the scene of a negotiating session (a three-sided symbol corresponding to a three-sided table or a depiction of negotiations where three parties recount different versions of history, defending the interests of their own constituencies. The user and the three parties: Government and Armed Forces on one side, FARC on another, and Victims on the third.

The metaphor proposes a digital conversation with the other participants with the user located at the center of a negotiating table to hear the viewpoints and positions of the three parties located opposite him or her and to his or her left and right.



The user chooses one of the topics related to the peace agreement (from the agenda of points to be discussed), and the database of video clips provides a corresponding documentary narrative that constructs a history including all the parties, each of which has a chance to be heard, and requires the user to contribute to a conversation in order to advance through the narration.

A cross appears on the screen, dividing it into four sections. The user sees a depiction of the negotiating table in one section and the three parties provide content in the other three sections. The user can choose to hear each of the three perspectives based on his or her preference, or select an option to see the parts of the documentary in random order. As the user consults the content, the cross that divides the parties from each other gradually fades away and eventually disappears, alluding to the ability of negotiators to cross boundaries, overcome barriers, gradually reach consensus, and unite the separated parties, visually by merging them into a single image and materially by reaching the desired peace agreement.

The first step that should be taken to progress through the interactive narration is to listen to the other parties, understand their reality, and understand why they acted as they did. The second step is to converse and empathize with those parties and break down remaining resistance to hearing and understanding them.

One of the objectives of the interactive platform is to offer content that goes deeper than the linear documentary. The system allows users to unblock excerpts of interviews with representatives of the parties as they strive to reach agreements (as well as links to the full interviews on Vimeo, and most importantly, to testimony by the war's victims).

Mode of representation: a collage presenting victims, memories, animation, voices, and sound, among other things. Examples of projects that inspired the developers of the visual metaphor:

- *Kabul portraits* – graphic metaphor.
- *Welcome to Pine Point* – example of an interactive collage.
- *Proyecto Quipu* – the use of voices as a mediator.

- Interaction: Users interact with the contents. They acquire a role and empathize with the other positions, other points of view, and other sides of the coin.

- Goal of this level: To listen and participate in the current (2017) conversation about peace in Colombia.



7.4 – In-depth Video Interviews

This platform links up with the timeline because its contents are journalistic products and in-depth interviews are used as a research tool. Over 200 hours of recorded interviews on the platform will not have been used in the two project documentaries, and it is proposed to use a video aggregator (Vimeo Pro account) to publish complete interviews with the principal personalities involved in the peace process.

Neither the linear documentary nor the interactive documentary can show the totality of in-depth unique interviews, the contents of which can change users' understanding of history and uncover key factors that pushed the peace process forward. Active users must proactively engage with the interactive documentary to gain access to this expanded content. Every time a user comes close to agreeing with one of the parties (Government, FARC, or victims), an in-depth interview with a representative of that party is unblocked.

- Interaction: Unblocking of content (with a password or other system for gaining access) allows previously passive users to see videos.

- Goal of this level: To deepen understanding of the contents through exposure to complete interviews. Learn about specific aspects of events that changed the course of history.

7.5 – Social Networks – Contribution

We project a fundamental role for social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, to guarantee the widespread popularity of the project. Users can recommend the Project to their online contacts or use online forums to promote debates on the topics it covers.

Second, we foresee the design and implementation of an online conversation forum for the exchange of ideas, which will benefit from the feedback provided by users of the interactive documentary.

How will these works? The interactive documentary asks users to voluntarily upload contributions in written, recorded (video or audio), or other form. This information will be made available after being uploaded (with its contributor's permission) to a participatory forum, while establishing timelines of user contributions.

This will provide for a permanently open forum/archive (perhaps in collaboration with the Center for Historical Memory) where any victim who wants to can archive their oral/visual testimony.



- Interaction: Recommend and share user contributions and victims' stories.
- Goal of this level: To spread the news of the project on the Internet and archive victim testimonies.

7.6 – Other Elements

Short documentary videos on subjects that offer new perspectives on the same topic, as described below:

Transitional Justice

A short documentary that describes the groundbreaking system by means of which peace in Colombia was achieved – financed by the International Center for Transitional Justice.

Women and the Conflict

A short documentary that uses hard-hitting interviews to illustrate the role of women in the armed conflict as the principal victims of violence – financed by UN Women.

The Armed Forces

A short documentary on the role that the Armed Forces played in the armed conflict.

Victims

Introductory video to encourage victims to contribute testimony to the online forum outlined in point 5.

- Interaction: Watching short documentaries.
- Goal of this level: To offer other perspectives and ways to think and reflect about the conflict.

7.7 – Educational Project

Actions will be taken to bring the materials produced up to this point to classrooms inside and outside Colombia (the project will contain materials in Spanish and English), to explain



the peace process as an exemplary story in which a solution has been found after a great deal of effort, and as an affirmation of the Colombian people's self-esteem after it was eroded over time.

To implement the project at the primary, secondary, and university levels in different educational systems, worksheets will be produced, providing activities and exercises to help students engage in the following educational practices:

- Explore the history outlined on the timeline
- Watch the audiovisual documentary
- Navigate the interactive documentary
- Watch the in-depth interviews
- Use the additional audiovisual materials

- Interaction: Principally watching, listening, and navigating audiovisual materials, but also participating in discussion groups, individual exercises, and joint activities using proposed learning guides.

- Goal of this level: To learn about what happened and raise the consciousness of younger generations so that this history doesn't repeat itself. To provide information and representations regarding an exemplary peace process in the world.

7.8 – Collective Viewings and Guided Experiences

The material that has been generated constitutes unique and exemplary testimony regarding the Colombian conflict over the course of the last 50 years. This is one very few projects that relate the four-year story of the peace negotiations in Havana using recorded images. It constitutes a valuable audiovisual and interactive resource for future generations and the country in general.

The challenge now is to make the existence of this material known and have communities and organizations that consider it valuable request a 'guided tour' through the recent history of Colombia and its successful peace process. If there is demand, a physical space will be secured for an audiovisual installation (video projector, computer, and sound system) programmed to provide custom navigation through selected elements of the transmedia documentary.

Example of a session (approximately three hours):



- The narrator explains the beginnings of the conflict while providing additional information and projecting the timeline as a visual aid (15 min.).
- Participants watch the complete audiovisual documentary (2 hr.)
- The guide navigates through the interactive documentary and invites others to participate and contribute after the guided presentation (30 min.)
- Debate and discussion (recorded and made available for viewing with the consent of participants)

Bonus to stimulate the public to attend events: Those who attend may have certain contents unblocked (in-depth interviews, ancillary videos, etc.) as a reward for attending the event and for their participation in the project.

- Interaction: Viewing, guided navigation, and debate and discussion among attendees as well as participating groups.

- Goal of this level: To bring the transmedia documentary to the most remote parts of Colombia and overseas in order to disseminate its message.

8. Team

Margarita Martínez – Director and Executive Producer

Colombian documentarian, Law degree from Universidad de los Andes, Masters degrees in Journalism and International Relations from Columbia University. Correspondent in Bogotá for the Associated Press for seven years, where she covered the period of the most extreme violence during the long Colombian war.

Currently finishing a documentary on the negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC, filmed in Havana with unparalleled access to principal participants over the course of 30 months. Her best-known work is *La Sierra*, winner of international prizes and broadcast over principal networks worldwide. Her other full-length works include *Robatierra* and *La Ola Verde*.

Harvard University 2009 Nieman Fellow. Recipient of the prestigious *Maria Moors Cabot* award in 2016.



Arnau Gifreu Castells – Executive and Transmedia Producer

Audiovisual and multimedia producer, consultant, and researcher. PhD in Communication and Masters in Digital Arts from the Universidad Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona, Spain). Research Affiliate of the Open Documentary Lab (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and member of the organization *i-Docs* (University of the West of England). Author of books and articles on interactive and transmedia nonfiction and the interactive documentary. Coordinates *interDocsBarcelona* (*Docs Barcelona*). Collaborates with interactive media department of RTVE.ES (Spanish Televisión, *We are Documentaries* project).

In the field of interactive and transmedia projects, has participated in directing (*COME/IN/DOC*, *La Marató de TV3*), production (*Cyborg Project*), design of interaction and coordination (*Bugarach: How to Survive the Apocalipsis*) and consultancy (*Las Sinsombrero*, *Pregoneros de Medellín*).

LA RETRATISTA PRODUCTIONS

Produces documentaries with high impact sociopolitical content, principally regarding less-seen aspects of Colombian society. Director Margarita Martínez has produced high-quality projects seen around the world. Web site: www.laretratistaproductora.com

+ OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM

Alfonso Parra – Director of Photography

Began his career as Director of Photography in 1993, focusing on documentaries and full-length fiction, including *Mujeres en el Parque*, *Nubes de Verano*, *La flaqueza del bolchevique*, *Paisito*, *La bicicleta*, *El juego de Cuba* and *Eloxio de la distancia*, among many other films. He has also filmed TV series including *Reliquias* and Colombian shows *Pambelé* and *La Ley del Corazón*, with a special interest in new digital technologies for production and post-production.

Teaches at EICTV in Cuba, ESCAC in Catalonia, ECAM in Madrid and the National University of Colombia. Founding partner at CCD, the Center for Digital Cinematography, which is dedicated to the dissemination and instruction of cinematography in the Spanish-speaking world.



Frequently publishes in national and international specialized journals, and works with Canon, ARRI, SONY, and Cooke in evaluating cinematographic cameras and lenses. Has worked with directors including Felipe Vega, Basilio Martín Patino, Carlos Amil, Manuel Martín Cuenca, Sigfrid Monleón, Margarita Martínez, Sergio Osorio, and Ana Díez. Web page at www.alfonsoparra.com provides information on his work and publications.

Gabriel Baudet Vivanco – Editor

Film and television editor since 1996 in Italy, Mexico, and currently in Colombia. Studied in Rome and at the International School of Film and Television in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba.

Edited outstanding films and documentaries of recent years in Colombia, including *Carta a una sombra*, *Don Ca*, *Jardín de amapolas*, *Home*, and *La ola verde*. Currently editing *The Negotiators*, a full-length documentary on Colombia's peace negotiations. Teaches film editing at the Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá and serves on juries for several film awards.

Outreach Producers

- María Fernanda Márquez
- Catalina Samper

Partners

- Good Pitch (affiliated since 2017)
- The International Center for Transitional Justice
- UN Woman
- The Fund for Peace (Colombian governmental entity)
- *Caracol Televisión*