



ETERNAL CHAINS

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by

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Log Line

A drama about a brilliant American geneticist and her struggle in Argentina, as she pits her courage and genetic techniques against brutal tyrants and kidnapers, to reunite the "Grandmothers of the Disappeared" with their stolen grandchildren. It's loosely based on actual events.

Grandmothers Of The Disappeared

When Argentina's military overthrew Peron's government, they abducted any suspected opponents, and hundreds of children were either kidnapped along with their parents or born in captivity. Early in the reign of terror, a human rights organization called the "Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo" was founded.

These grandmothers kept a vigil in the plaza across from the military offices, picketing for the return of their children and grandchildren. Their natural dignity made them a powerful symbol of resistance. But they were more than that--they were a fully operational intelligence organization, gathering an enormous amount of evidence about the fate of the disappeared.

The Story

The geneticist is Nancy, about 35, attractive, affable and idealistic. And when she sets her sights on a worthy goal, she puts her very heart and soul and endless supply of vitality into achieving it. She's a well respected researcher and professor at UC Berkeley.

In 1976 Nancy and her husband, who's an ecologist, leave to teach science at a college in Argentina. It's part of a prestigious exchange program. Nancy thoroughly enjoys the experience, finds the eagerness of the Argentine students very rewarding, is enthralled with the culture and its earthy people and makes many friends.

Then in the spring of 1977, the serenity of the campus is suddenly shattered. We see images of violence and mayhem, as the military attacks the college and the city. They overthrow Peron's government and go on a rampage of kidnapping, torture and murder that eventually leaves 12,000 people dead.

Nancy goes to her closest friend, Elsa, an elderly woman who owns a bakery, and sees soldiers abducting Elsa's pregnant daughter and son-in-law. Nancy tries to stop them, but she's knocked down, a gun is put to her head, she's about to be shot. But suddenly, General Britos, the top military officer, drives by and recognizes her. She was his nephew's favorite teacher and he saw her give a lecture once. He spares her life, but forces her to leave the country immediately.

Soon after Nancy returns to California, she gives birth to a daughter, Emily. And in the next few years Nancy goes on to become an accomplished geneticist and makes ground breaking discoveries about breast cancer.

But she and her husband drift apart, and in early '81 they are divorced. And that summer the Argentine military relinquishes power and a civilian government is installed.

Nancy and Emily return to Buenos Aires to help Elsa and the rest of their friends who are now part of the "Grandmothers of the Disappeared". Although it turns out that most of the Grandmothers' children were killed after the military seized them, hundreds of missing grandchildren were kept by the military or sold on Argentina's active black market in babies.

So Nancy struggles to develop genetic tests to prove scientifically, that suspected kidnapped children really belong to the Grandmothers. Meanwhile in the courts, the military's powerful attorneys are succeeding in stalling and generally outmatching the Grandmothers.

But Nancy is able to entice the city's finest attorney, Carlos, to take on their fight for free. As Carlos makes progress in the courtroom battles, he and Nancy also fall in love. And when the passion of these two strong willed individuals are combined, it results in a very sensual romance that later leads to marriage.

Nancy's early genetic tests and Carlos' brilliant legal maneuverings succeed in uniting many of the grandmothers with the children. But as progress is made, they must grapple with increasing covert violence directed at them by the ruthless military.

And when it's suspected that General Britos' daughter is really Elsa's abducted grandchild, Nancy must quickly invent a new genetic technique and summon up all her courage to face Britos down as he tries to assassinate her.

This film takes the classic theme of truth against tyranny and combines it with a modern David vs. Goliath conflict that generates a very moving story. Although the tale has a fair share of dreadful menace, it's essentially heart warming, and its conclusion is uplifting to the human spirit. And there's nothing more compelling than kidnapped children being reunited with their true families.

ETERNAL CHAINS

We're at the U.C. Berkeley campus in 1976. Inside an impressive genetics lab is Nancy Crandel. She's about 35, attractive, affable and idealistic. Once this woman sets her sight on a worthy goal, she puts her unwavering heart and soul and endless supply of vitality into achieving it.

Right now we watch this blur of frenetic energy as she's packing up equipment and personal belongings for a trip. Nancy is a well respected researcher and professor of genetics. She soon exits the lab with her belongings, races down the hall. Passes several classrooms and student labs.

She suddenly stops. Looks like she's recalling something. Gazes inside an empty lab. And we hear her in a voice over...

"Yeah, I know it sounds dippy, but I always wanted to do science for idealistic, relevant reasons. But you have to set out to do it that way from the very beginning."

Inside the lab, we see students materialize. They're dressed in the garb of the late '60s, and among them we see a younger Nancy enthusiastically beginning her Ph.D. program.

"Technical advances don't have to dehumanize society. If it's guided with the right intentions, it can help make people's lives healthier and more harmonious."

We see the Berkeley campus in chaos and turmoil with protests against the Vietnam war raging. "Unfortunately, these were not harmonious times. I chose Berkeley for my grad work because of its political reputation as well as its academic one. And I witnessed some scenes that certainly opened my small town Minnesota eyes."

Nancy vehemently pickets against the war as police in riot gear advance on the protesters. Then she and her fellow students are dragged along the ground and tossed in a police van.

In the van, Nancy ignores the chaos, pulls out a paisley covered note pad, and a slide rule, and works on complex equations.

Across from her, a hippie eyes her with disdain, asks if she's a science major. She nods. He angrily says that scientists suck. All they do is hurt people. Making killer napalm, bigger missiles, and shit that turns the environment into a cess pool. They should all just be shipped off somewhere.

A zealous spark ignites in her eyes. She angrily grabs his shirt, shoves the startled guy against the wall and slaps his chest with her note pad.

"You dumb pompous slug! You don't know crap about what I'm doing. I'm trying to get these goddamn numbers to tell me if your stupid genes in your stupid white blood cells are going to mutate from DNA killing chemicals in the environment. I'm trying to keep people healthy--not kill them. You shit!"

She notices speckles of paint on his clothes. "Mr. artsy fartsy major?" The scared guy nods. "The toxic chemicals in just one of your paintings poisons the environment more than a years worth of my experiments."

In a school lab, we see the paisley pad on a table as she works on an experiment. She kicks the table. "I couldn't get any experiments to work. All my doctoral projects failed. My young ideas weren't stupid, but they were naive. My ambitions far exceeded my undeveloped lab skills."

She's close to quitting school altogether when she goes to see Berkeley biochemist Allan Wilson. (Today he's famous for his "Eve Hypothesis" which holds that we're all descended from an African woman who lived 200,000 years ago.)

Wilson invites her to work in his lab and steers her toward projects that make the most of her mathematical strengths. (She has a Masters degree in math)

The project she next designs attempts to discover the degree of genetic difference between humans and chimps. Astoundingly, the difference turns out to be less than one percent. The work lands her on the cover of the prestigious journal SCIENCE and she finally gets her Ph.D.

Nancy leaves the science building with a friend and we hear a bang. They run toward their dorm as tear gas canisters fall around them and police advance on a group of demonstrators. "Dodging tear gas to and from the lab was a constant activity. My science aerobics."

Nancy enters a dorm. Then we see her passionately making love to a man. "But there were other forms of aerobics I enjoyed even more." The man, Steven Daly, is an ecologist who becomes her husband.

Now we're back in 1976, and see an older Steven rolling his eyes as he stares at an oblivious Nancy, who's still dreaming by the lab door. He nudges her, says "Excuse me professor, I hope I'm not interfering with the creation of another stupendous theory. But we're supposed to get our butts to Argentina in a half hour."

She slowly comes back to reality, warmly smiles at him, and gives him a smoldering kiss that causes him to drop all his bags.

We see Nancy and Steven at Oakland airport, boarding an Argentina Airways jet. They're going to teach science for a year as part of a prestigious exchange program funded by the Ford Foundation.

At Buenos Aires University, Nancy enjoys the academic experience and finds the eagerness of the Argentine students very rewarding. She also falls in love with the country and its earthy people.

"I felt like I found my true home. I don't know if it was just one of those weird past life things or what? But I felt an integration and identification with that culture that was absolutely complete... And I sure as hell became addicted to Elsa's sweet planjeras."

We see her in a bakery as she bites into a planjera--an Argentine pastry. We also see the owner, Elsa, a good-natured woman of 55. It's obvious they're good friends. Elsa's pregnant daughter, Delita, and her husband are also working there. Nancy thanks Elsa and leaves with her bag of pastry.

Outside, Nancy converses with another friend sitting in the plaza square called the Plaza de Mayo. The elderly woman's name is Gabrielle and she sits next to her daughter, Maria, who balances her two-year-old son, Nestor, on her lap. Nestor reaches up toward his mother's mouth and touches a gold tooth that sparkles in the sunlight.

Sunny spring day in 1977. We see Nancy and Steven happily walking arm in arm on the serene college campus. They sit on a stone bench which is sculpted to look like an alligator. They fervently kiss and embrace.

Suddenly, the calm is shattered by the sound of explosions in the distance. And it's getting closer. We watch images of mayhem and horror as she speaks...

"Then my paradise turned into a bloody hell. The military overthrew Isabel Peron's civilian government and went on a rampage. The turmoil I witnessed in Berkeley, as I protested the military buildup in Vietnam, looked like Disneyland antics compared to this. Instead of just dodging tear gas on the way to the lab--my students were trying to avoid gunfire and tanks. And they were losing."

Students are chaotically running from advancing soldiers. Some hide by the alligator bench. A tank shell explodes the alligator's tail to rubble. Several dead students fall over the bench. Their blood seeps into the stone.

"Our friends were being murdered. The ones who weren't being murdered were in hiding or in exile. The headless bodies of my students were showing up on the doorsteps of their parents."

One night, Nancy and Steven are driving through town. Army jeeps are passing all around them. The soldiers are going into houses and pulling out suspected opponents of the right-wing regime.

Nancy is horrified as she watches soldiers go into Gabrielle's house and take away Maria, her husband and her son Nestor.

Then they see Elsa's bakery and hear crashing sounds as soldiers smash up the place. Delita and her son-in-law are dragged out and pushed toward an army truck. Elsa runs out, grabbing at the soldiers. She tries to prevent them from taking her daughter. Delita falls hard to the street.

Nancy makes Steven stop the car. She leaps out and runs to Elsa. With that same zealous spark in her eyes when she slammed the hippie, Nancy tears at the soldier grabbing Delita.

"She's pregnant goddamnit! You fucking pig." She's viciously slammed to the street.

As Steven gets out he's knocked unconscious with a rifle butt. Another soldier cocks his rifle, puts it to Nancy's head, about to fire. But we hear a jeep pull up and a man say halt.

The man is General Britos, a fierce looking man in his 40's, who's very full of himself. All the soldiers freeze, come to attention. Britos has a slimy smile planted on his face; obviously enjoying the violent mayhem.

He says, "Ah, the American teacher of science my nephew so favors. Miss Crandel. He took me to see you lecture once. I'll be nice and allow you to go back to America."

A soldier picks her up. She hesitates. Britos firmly tells her to go home now. Or go home in a coffin later.

Tears stream down Nancy's face as her gaze meets Elsa's eyes--filled with terror. Nancy drags her husband into the car and drives off.

Planjeras on the ground are covered with broken glass. Soldier's boots flatten them as they move on.

We next see Nancy in a hospital bed. Then from her window, we see the Berkeley hills. And a nurse crosses and places her new born daughter, Emily, into her arms.

"Although Emily's birth filled my heart with a joy I had never known before, part of my heart couldn't escape a twinge of pain as I watched the horrifying images of my beloved Argentina."

She watches a news report on TV. "The military embarked on a four-year program of kidnapping, torture, and murder that left 12,000 people dead. Moreover, several hundred children were either kidnapped along with their parents or born in captivity."

"Pregnant women were kept alive in detention centers until they gave birth; then they were murdered. I held Emily closer."

We see Nancy and Steven at home playing with one-year-old Emily. "Early in the reign of terror an extraordinary human rights organization called the "Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo" was founded."

Now we watch TV and see Elsa and many other grandmothers picketing in the square.

"The grandmothers kept a vigil in the square across from the military offices, demanding the return of their children and grandchildren. Their natural dignity made them a powerful symbol of resistance. But they were much more than that--they were a fully operational intelligence organization, gathering an enormous amount of evidence about the fate of the disappeared."

We see Nancy at work in her office. She places a plastic sheet of genetic patterns on a light-table and carefully marks them with her pen. Emily, now two, attacks a toy walrus in a play-pen.

In the years that follow, Nancy becomes an accomplished geneticist and tackles a number of genetics problems. But the one that remains at the center of her research efforts to the present day is her search for the genes responsible for breast cancer.

She makes ground breaking discoveries that helps unlock the puzzle. She's finally able to prove that the cancer genes could be inherited and unravels some of the complex pattern sequences that could lead to an eventual cure.

But the genetic puzzle wasn't the only thing that was unraveling. Her marriage to Steven comes apart.

We see them going through a divorce. Nancy maintains custody of Emily.

Nancy's eyes are tearful as she sifts through snapshots of her and Steven in the hectic days of the sixties. "Neither one of us understood how it happened, but we somehow drifted apart. Then Steven fell in love with a dance teacher... Maybe I got too lost in my work. I don't know. Maybe that ethereal spark we first shared in the sixties just couldn't be expected to remain alive as the eighties began. I don't know."

Four-year-old Emily bursts in and locks a hug around her mother. Tells her Elsa is on TV. They go watch.

"It was 1981 and Argentina's military relinquished power. I was shocked to see how drained Elsa looked as she stood there with Gabrielle and the rest of the "Grandmothers of the Disappeared."

We hear on the TV how it becomes apparent that most of the adults who had disappeared were dead. The grandmothers could only hope to discover where the bodies were buried, dig up the remains, and identify their lost sons and daughters.

But the fate of their grandchildren was a different matter: they had become the living booty of the dirty war.

Like several other South American countries, Argentina has always had an active black market in babies. Some of the children of the disappeared had been kept by members of the military, some given away, some even sold to collaborators.

"As I listened it occurred to me that I might be able to help the grandmothers with the next challenge they faced in reuniting their families."

With some technical support from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Nancy and Emily fly to Argentina that summer. Cristian Orrego, a member of the Association's Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility, meets them at the airport.

As he drives them into Buenos Aires, Nancy and Emily look through a book compiled by the grandmothers. It's filled with snapshots and information of their dead and missing relatives.

Cristian explains how the dedicated detective work of the grandmothers has amassed a remarkable amount of information about the missing grandchildren.

Nancy and Emily drive to the Plaza de Mayo where the grandmothers had been keeping a vigil during the military regime's rule.

They go to Elsa's restored bakery. Nancy has a very emotional reuniting with Elsa and Gabrielle; many hugs and tears. She and Emily also stuff their faces with Elsa's planjeras. Elsa tells her she'll organize the grandmothers for a strategy meeting tomorrow night.

High atop a hill, we see the stately mansion of General Britos. In the living room, we see his adorable four-year-old daughter, Paula. Her eyes widen with fear as Britos loudly hollers at her for playing with her toys outside of her playroom. His wife scoops up Paula and tells Britos not to scream at the child.

Britos huffs away to his study and meets with an officer and several other important civilians who were former collaborators or guards. We learn they are the illegal parents of some of the kidnapped grandchildren. And they're scared.

Britos tells them not to worry, the military has the finest lawyers in the land. And other assets at their disposal. But they say the grandmothers have an American scientist who may be able to help prove which children belong to whom. Nancy Crandel.

More than a trace of anger flickers in Britos' eyes. He turns away. Although he tries not to show it, his face betrays some worry as he watches Paula playing in the yard.

We have a suspicion that she may be one of the "disappeared."

That night Cristian takes Nancy to a lavish party at a mansion in Buenos Aires. She looks quite stunning in her gown.

Cristian says it may take more than scientific magic to reunite the families. Although the military is technically out of power, they still pull more than a few strings. And they're certainly not above doing any dirty work. It could become dangerous for Nancy.

Cristian explains how the military has the best attorneys and they've been able to delay and muddle things up in the preliminary court hearings. He says the grandmothers have competent legal counsel but they are too poor to afford a higher level.

She asks who is one of the finest in town. He mentions Carlos Osvaldo is considered the best. But he's also the most expensive. He points up to a balcony.

Nancy's eyes widen with interest as she glimpses Carlos. He's a very handsome man, around 40. He's dressed to perfection and looks the epitome of confidence as he gaily talks to several attractive women who hang on his every word.

Nancy struts up to the balcony. And with that same zealous spark in her eyes--she fixes her stare upon Carlos. He soon turns around, notices her. Then has a hard time wrenching his gaze away. He leaves the other women and crosses to her. We can definitely tell these two strong-willed people are attracted to each other. They begin to flirt.

She tells him, "I'm looking for the best."

"I'm the best in various pursuits."

"It's legal services I require."

"We can start there... And move on to more interesting avenues."

"Have you ever lowered your usual fee for a good cause?"

"Never." He kisses her hand. "But perhaps I can make an exception in your case."

But when she tells him exactly what's up, he quickly drops her hand and says he enjoys breathing too much to take the grandmother's case. She calls him a coward, walks off in a huff and heads downstairs.

Where she soon runs into General Britos. He's friendly to her with an edge of menace hidden just below the surface. Although he doesn't come right out and say it, it's clear he thinks it may prove healthier for her to leave the country. Nancy tries to hide it, but she's visibly shaken.

Carlos comes up and puts an arm around her. Britos tells him she's not the proper type of client for him to take on. Carlos takes offense. Britos just chuckles and walks away. Nancy breathes a sigh of relief.

Carlos pulls Nancy to the dance floor. He's an excellent dancer and they move well together. After much persistent charm, he's finally able to talk her into having lunch with him tomorrow.

The next afternoon, Carlos drives his Rolls Royce up to Nancy's cottage. She greets him and takes him to the backyard to meet Emily. But when he gets there, there's little Emily plus a surprise.

Thirty grandmothers. Each one walks up to him, hands over a picture of their missing grandchild. Then they just step back and silently stare.

Carlos tries to resist, but soon he can't help but have his heart touched by their woeful and damaged souls. For the first time in his career, he agrees to take a case for free. The grandmothers are ecstatic. His face is soon covered with lipstick smudges from all their kisses.

Nancy, Emily and Carlos are walking through town. Carlos has already thoroughly captivated Emily. Nancy looks bemused as she watches him teaching her daughter an Argentinean children's song. Then he obeys Emily's orders and lifts her atop his shoulders and gallops down the sidewalk.

When they're out of earshot, he tells her he wants her mom to like him more. She tells him maybe that's good since mom seems lonely since daddy went away. She also gives him inside information about all of Nancy's likes and dislikes.

Armed with this knowledge, he phones a restaurant and arranges a custom lunch prepared.

We next see them eating at an elegant restaurant, and Nancy is surrounded by an eclectic assortment of her favorite foods. Including lobster, Somore crackers with peanut butter and blackberry jam, onion rings, hot fudge sundae with M&M toppings, etc. Nancy is amused and enjoys the specialized attention.

Later, when a headache bothers Nancy, Carlos asks if she wants aspirin. But Emily shows him that by rubbing the web of skin between her thumb and forefinger it helps to get rid of the pain. He takes Nancy's other hand, rubs it too.

Emily tells him massaging her shoulders works sometimes for the bad headaches she gets from playing with her genes too long. Although she protests, Carlos stands up, stands behind her and starts massaging her shoulders.

The other patrons stare at them. But soon Nancy sighs, gives in, closes her eyes. Emily says if the pain is really bad, her kisses help too. He asks Nancy if it's really bad. She nods. He kisses her forehead. Emily frowns, says not there, on the lips. And Carlos plants a small kiss there. Nancy is affected. He asks if the pain is all gone. She shakes her head. So he gives her another kiss, lingers a little longer. Asks again. She can only manage a weak "huh?" He continues to massage her shoulders. Emily smiles at him.

That night, in the plaza's town hall, the "Grandmothers of the Disappeared" hold a meeting and discuss possible strategies with Nancy and Carlos. Elsa tells how they gathered leads on possible missing children.

In some cases, in which they knew a child's sex and time and place of birth, they were able to track the child's movements from the very beginning. Other stolen children came to light when they were registered for kindergarten. And the grandmothers had excellent sources in the schools--staff members on the lookout for phony birth certificates and medical records.

Carlos explains to Nancy that the new civilian government, headed by Raul Alfonsin, has created a national commission to determine the fate of the disappeared and bring their tormentors to justice. Even so, he says that establishing the children's identities in court will take more than the circumstantial evidence the grandmothers have collected.

"It was going to be necessary to prove who the child really was, not just who the child wasn't. The Grandmothers needed a genetic test that would certify they were related to the children they claimed as their kin. So I needed to show that a given grandmother and a given grandchild shared genetic markers so specific that the match had to be a result of biology and not mere chance. The key was choosing the right markers. A bit of a challenge."

Nancy, Cristian and Emily are unpacking supplies in a lab at Buenos Aires University. As Nancy looks over the campus, she is visibly touched by the emotions it stirs. The joyful times teaching with her husband. The horrors that followed with the military rampage.

She fixes her gaze upon the alligator bench where she and Steve shared a romantic moment just before the military takeover. The trail is a rubble of stones. And she sees several spots where blood stains still remain.

She thinks of her students who were murdered a few years before. Her eyes narrow in anger and determination. She diligently sets out to develop her genetic research. Emily proudly assists her.

Late at night, Cristian and Emily are asleep on a couch. Nancy looks exhausted but she continues to work with unyielding energy.

As the light of dawn filters into the lab, she is still at it.

In court, we see Nancy and Emily enjoying Carlos' performance. He's a smooth and energetic magician. His elegant attire and demeanor is a stark and amusing contrast to the earthy grandmothers that cram the courtroom behind him.

Carlos counters all of the military lawyers' stalling techniques and other legal maneuverings. And the judge orders the first case to get underway tomorrow.

Nancy glares at the military lawyers. "The more I learned about what happened to some of my friends children, the angrier and more resolute I became. In one case a child was given to a prostitute by a soldier as payment for services rendered. In another, a gangster who had been abusive to his girlfriend returned the next day with a conciliatory present: a newborn procured from an acquaintance in the military. It was just incredible."

Nancy is again working late at night in the lab. Carlos arrives. She hugs him, excitedly exclaims that she may have figured out a breakthrough test. He looks quite confused as she talks a mile a minute, spitting out complex genetic concepts.

He tries to calm her down, asks to explain it in normal people talk. She's basically come up with a way to utilize a genetic testing method that operates with the key gene markers called human leukocyte antigens (HLA). And has figured out that by going with her HLA typing idea, only a simple blood test would be needed for the base of the DNA analysis.

She goes on and on, but then almost faints, plops down on a chair. He insists she not work all night again--she won't be able to help the grandmothers if she dies of exhaustion.

She says he's silly and goes to the light table and works on sheets of genetic charts. But he lifts her up and forcibly carries her out in his arms.

They go to Elsa's apartment that's located over her bakery. Emily is asleep in bed and Elsa tells Nancy to leave her; she would enjoy it if she stays. With moist eyes, Elsa says she's feeling like a grandmother tonight--pretending Emily is the grandchild she never had the pleasure of knowing. Nancy gives her a heartfelt hug. She and Carlos exit.

Carlos takes Nancy to a nightclub, one of several where he's well known and treated like royalty by the management. While they sit at a good table, several times we see fashion model type woman approach him and speak flirtatiously as they pass. He does his best to ignore them and give Nancy his full attention. She shakes her head, entertained by it all.

But one beautiful woman walks right up to him, angrily berates him for not calling all week. He tries to defuse the situation, says his new case is taking all his time. She looks right at Nancy, says she certainly sees nothing here that's worth his valuable time. And then gives Nancy the finger.

This finally gets Nancy perturbed, she stands and looks as if she might punch her out. Carlos quickly pulls Nancy away to the dance floor. As they dance Nancy questions him too, asks why he's going out with her.

"So maybe I'm just your token scientist this week? Before you move onto a new exotic flavor tomorrow."

"I would like to feast on only your flavor for all my remaining tomorrow's," he gently nibbles along her neck.

"Get real. What the hell are you talking about? You've only known me for a week."

"That can be enough sometimes."

"Why me? I'm not as hot as those nubile 20 year-old models anymore."

"On the contrary. You are quite beautiful and you have the true fire within; more than a dozen of them." He caresses her bare back and pulls her against him. She's going with it, melting into him.

"I find myself with a desperate need to be challenged and intrigued by thoughts, as well as flesh. We are well matched, Nancy. Your complex mind is an aphrodisiac to me. Your thoughts swirl sensuous webs I cannot escape. My love is yours."

She lifts her head from his shoulder, surprised, looks him in the eye. Trying to decide if those unusual lines are bullshit.

They're not. She looks as if she believes he's sincere. Now she looks scared. "Uh,oh. You're serious." Their eyes dig into each other as they twirl. She's getting misty eyed.

"Carlos. I've got one of those darn headaches again. Can you fix it?"

And he kisses her passionately. Their mouths devour each other.

They go to Carlos' home. It's a medium sized mansion. By the large pool in back, they're sipping champagne as they dance, close and slow. They look very infatuated with each other. And now they kiss.

"Although my rational scientific mind was repelling against the notion, my heart was telling me that I was indeed falling in love with this man. I have never been so captivated by someone."

She starts to unbutton his shirt. Then hungrily kisses his chest. He quickly responds and unzips her skirt. They begin to fondle each other.

We next see them in the pool. As their bodies are sculpted by the soft moonlight, we can almost make out that they're naked. He cradles her in his arms as they passionately kiss.

He lifts her onto a large floating raft, then joins her. We hear them moan with pleasure. The raft disturbs the still water as they begin to make love. We hear their breathing becoming more ragged. And watch the mesmerizing ripple patterns magnify in intensity.

We next view the water in Nancy's glass as she sips it in the courtroom. She then discusses her plan with Carlos about which child they should try her HLA genetic test on.

The child is a six-year-old boy who is suspected to be Gabrielle's' grandson Nestor (who we last saw at two on his mother's lap, touching her gold tooth.)

He turned up in the home of a guard who had worked at the detention center where Gabrielle's daughter was taken. He came to the grandmother's attention when he was registered for kindergarten with questionable documents.

The military's attorneys state that the guard and his wife refuse to give blood samples. But the judge can legally order it to be taken of the boy. And he tells Nancy to do so.

She has also taken a sample of Gabrielle's blood. And although Nestor's paternal grandparents had died, Nancy is able to construct their HLA-type by their three surviving children.

In court another day, Nancy testifies and explains her genetic tests. Her results matched Nestor's HLA with Gabrielle's type, and with the type on his paternal grandparents side. She also points out that Nestor's HLA is rather uncommon in the Argentine population, making the chances of just a coincidental match extremely low. In fact there's a 99.8 percent probability that Nestor was Gabrielle's grandson.

As the military lawyers see they are about to lose to the incontestable scientific evidence, they try another tact. They say the guard's family is the only one the boy could remember and it would be too disruptive to remove him now.

Nancy looks incredulous, jabs Carlos in the ribs--he should object or something. But Carlos says this is an important test case and they should try to refute any and all of the opposition's claims.

Carlos tells the judge that there is no way to really anticipate how much a two-year-old child might remember. But a very wise judge like himself could make an educated assessment. Carlos tries to convince the flattered judge to interview Nestor at the house where he grew up. Although the military lawyers vehemently protest, the judge agrees.

The next day, Nestor is brought to Gabrielle's home. Across the street Nancy, Emily and the grandmothers eagerly watch.

The boy smiles as he gets out of the guard's car and sees the house. He proceeds to walk right by Carlos, the military attorneys and the judge who's about to speak to him. Nestor skips up the stairs to the porch and makes an immediate right like he knows where he's going. He hops on a swinging bench and giggles as he sways.

The judge questions him. Asks if he remembers his mother. Nestor says she was very nice. And she had a glowing tooth (the gold one). She used to sing him a song that he now starts to hum. Carlos tells the judge the connections that Nestor are making are true.

Then Nestor looks impatient, opens the door and marches inside. The surprised judge, Carlos, and the other lawyers follow him. Then the large audience crosses the street and peeks in the windows.

Nestor goes right into the room where he used to sleep and sits on his bed. Then he demands to see his "Hector Horsie". The judge then allows Gabrielle to come out to him. Hector jumps off the bed, hugs her and calls her "grandma". She picks him up, crying as she hugs him. She rummages in the closet and produces a horse doll. Nestor cuddles the Hector Horsie like a long lost friend.

There isn't a dry eye in the house. Even the military lawyers look touched and a little ashamed. Nancy tells the judge that it's been scientifically proven in the U.S. that most of a child's personality development occurs in their first three years of life.

Needless to say, the judge gives custody to Gabrielle. Carlos' cheeks are again littered with many lipstick smudges as Gabrielle kisses up a storm. Then she almost hugs the life out of Nancy.

"At that moment I felt a richer sense of accomplishment than if I had won a dozen Nobel prizes. I never felt so proud to be a scientist before. And I never felt so complete."

That night, in General Britos' mansion, he meets with the lawyers and some of the same illegal parents we saw previously. Britos looks as if he's ready to strangle the lawyers. Then he steps outside and harshly speaks to several officers. The officers take off into the night.

At Carlos' house, we see Nancy and Emily being served an opulent meal with an abundance of fine champagne being consumed. There's a festive air and much joy over winning their first case.

Later, Emily is in the living room; asleep on the couch. Nancy and Carlos are feverishly embracing in the parlor.

Carlos tries to talk her into sleeping over. She says she's exhausted and if she stays, they aren't going to get much sleep again. He puts his charm into overdrive but she walks out.

Looking at Nancy's cottage from the outside, we see her silhouette shut off the lights. A moment passes. The house explodes with a deafening boom. It's obliterated.

Then we see Emily quietly sleeping on a large bed.

And Nancy and Carlos making love in his bedroom. And as she warned, they continue through most of the night and get very little sleep.

The next day we find out Nancy's maid was the woman we saw in her house; she was killed. Nancy quickly dispatches Emily to the airport and she's sent back to stay with her father in Berkeley.

Carlos hires an armed body guard to stay with Nancy at all times. She and Carlos are sitting at a table at Elsa's bakery. As she pigs out on planjeras, we notice Elsa standing behind her.

She's holding a stack of plates, doesn't move a muscle and stares at something outside. Looks like she's seeing a ghost. Suddenly, the plates crash to the floor. She screams "Delita" and runs outside.

She hurries across the street. Heading toward... General Britos' limousine waiting at a red light. Visible at the window--his daughter Paula.

Britos notices Elsa running toward him. Then Nancy staring at him. Their eyes dig into each other. Britos motions the driver to go through the light.

Poor Elsa runs after the car and then collapses in the street. Nancy and Carlos go to her. She mutters over and over that her daughter Delita looked like Britos' daughter when she was that age. It must be her grandchild. It must be.

Carlos grimaces as his mind mulls over the possible consequences. Nancy's eyes narrow with determination as she watches Britos' car disappear in the distance. She tries to calm Elsa down.

Early the next morning, we see Carlos load a magazine into his pistol and slip it into his shoulder holster under his suit jacket. With him are a dozen armed men he hired, a couple of sheriffs and a magistrate with a court order. They march up to Britos' front door.

The General is handed the court order that requires him to allow a blood sample to be taken from Paula. Several of his lawyers look it over and ten army soldiers, with guns poised, look over them all. It's a very tense moment.

His lawyers advise him to comply. Nancy is brought from Carlos' car. She looks intimidated but determined as she walks by Britos and his predatory glare.

Inside his house she gently takes a blood sample from Paula. Then slowly and carefully, everyone leaves. Without incident.

We watch Carlos' large house turned into a fortress. Sandbag walls are made around the fence. Many armed guards are stationed. And much lab equipment is shuttled inside. Nancy, Cristian and several other scientists set up a lab.

Nancy looks over a photo Elsa hands her. It's her daughter Delita as a little girl. She looks very much like Paula.

We view a montage of courtroom battle scenes. "After the success of Nestor's case, we were able to match over fifty other grandchildren with my HLA-typing method. And with Carlos' impeccable court jousting, almost all were returned to their biological families."

We see Nancy working late at night with Cristian. Carlos comes in and massages her shoulders.

"But the limitations of my original approach soon became apparent. For example, the grandmothers don't always know who the probable grandparents are when they locate a child. So the child's HLA has to be compared with the hundreds of grandparent HLA types we gathered on file. In other cases there are simply too few living relatives to establish a convincing match with HLA alone."

Elsa is snoring in one of Carlos' bedrooms. Nancy smiles and tucks a sheet around her. "And unfortunately, this was the case with dear Elsa. Most of her family had been killed or died of old age."

Nancy snuggles in bed with Carlos, holds him tightly. "I had to come up with another method. And soon. With Argentina's economic chaos and political instability, Alfonsin's civilian government was on shaky ground. And the members of the military were becoming more powerful in many cities again."

Carlos makes a call and talks to the driver in one of his cars that's waiting near Britos' house. He's there to make sure Paula isn't taken out of the city. Britos leaves with his wife and Paula. His car is followed.

Paula is dropped off at school. Britos' wife cries as she watches her go. Britos tells her to shut up and blames her for this situation; he berates her for not being able to conceive a child. She looks crushed.

One night, we see Nancy pushing a flabbergasted Carlos out the front door of his house. She won't let him smoke the smelly cigar he's holding in his hand. When she slams the door he curses at her in Spanish.

He relights his cigar, strolls down the driveway. Says hello to one of the guards patrolling the grounds. He looks toward the front gate. Sees a milk truck cruising down the street. Looks perplexed. Mutters to himself.. "Milk trucks doesn't deliver at this time of..." Fear flickers in his eyes.

Suddenly he runs toward the gate, unholsters his pistol. Just as he starts firing, the driver dives from the truck. Carlos' bullets blast into the truck as it barrels toward him.

Blam! The truck, filled with explosives, erupts with tremendous force. Carlos dives to the ground. The blast blows apart the gate and sends debris flying over his head.

Nancy runs from the house in a panic. She goes to Carlos and frantically checks him. Luckily, he's not wounded. But the two guards at the gate are killed.

The next night, in the lab, Nancy, Cristian and the other scientists clink their glasses in a triumphant toast. "We finally came up with a way. This time I extracted the DNA samples not from the cell's nucleus--but from its mitochondria. Then using a new technique of polymerase chain reaction we could eventually work out a matching sequence. And this only required a single member of the mother's lineage. Such as Elsa."

Nancy asks Elsa for her keys. She and Cristian take a break and go to the bakery. Nancy's eyes light up as she scoops up the delicious pastries. Of course there are two armed guards waiting nearby at the car.

But suddenly a military truck screeches around the corner. A bomb is tossed at Carlos' Rolls and it blows up--killing the two guards.

The bakery is strafed with fire from the large, mounted machine gun. Cristian is hit and killed. Nancy, behind the bakery counter, narrowly misses being shot.

Nancy is horrified as she sees Cristian's dead body. Then the truck turns and comes back for another pass. Nancy dives for the back door and barely escapes.

As she runs down the narrow back streets, the truck follows. She just makes it over a wall as gunfire erupts all around her.

Soon she's frantically running around the college campus dodging from building to building. And, ironically, hiding in various nooks and crannies as we saw her students do years before.

She crouches behind the stone alligator bench. Suddenly it's strafed by the machine gun. It's head is blasted off. She frantically crawls away.

There are several close calls as the truck chases after her. Finally, she makes it to a phone and tells Carlos where she is.

After several tense moments, Carlos and his guards speed across the campus and head for her. The soldier's truck also closes in.

Carlos pokes out through the sunroof. And fires a bazooka rocket. The rocket hits its mark and the soldiers are blown up. Nancy runs to Carlos and trembles in his arms.

It's raining when they safely make it back to Carlos' house. Nancy has a bizarre expression on her face as she leaps from the car and runs to the garden behind the house. Carlos looks puzzled as he watches her.

Nancy drops to her knees in a muddy flower bed. "I had suppressed so much stress and terror in the past few months --tried to always maintain a brave controlled demeanor. But now it all swelled up inside me. I felt as if I would explode."

She breaks down, starts crying hard. Scoops up handfuls of mud, squeezes it through her hands. Rubs it around her neck.

"Moments before I was convinced I would soon be dead. I couldn't stop shaking. I felt like most of my spirit was still trapped in a dead zone. I desperately needed to feel connected, to feel alive. Or I never would again."

Carlos bends down to her, looks alarmed. He tries to lift her to her feet. She refuses. Pulls him down to the ground with her. Stares trance-like into his eyes. Kisses him desperately. Tears at his clothes. His expression is a odd mixture of trepidation and excitement. He rips off her blouse. Their clothes are soon discarded.

They desperately cling to each other. Lie in the flowers and mud. The rain lashes down on them as they start to make love.

We next witness several furious days of courtroom battles. The place contains enough armaments to equip a small army.

General Britos looks incredulous. He also looks as if he could strangle Nancy as she presents her mitochondrial DNA tests and convinces the judge that Paula's and Elsa's genetic maps are the same.

Carlos also handily counters all the military lawyers' arguments. He gives an impassioned summary.

The judge looks at that photo of Delita as a girl--and one of Paula now. He finally rules in favor of Elsa.

The grandmothers crowding the courtroom let out a tumultuous cheer. Nancy hugs Carlos with an incredible sense of relief.

Later that day we see the very emotional reuniting of Elsa with her granddaughter.

Nancy and Carlos are looking down from the top of a hill on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. The lights of the city pulsate below. They're sitting at an elaborately set table, candelabra flickers in the breeze. They're finishing a sumptuous dinner his cook has prepared.

Violinists play romantic music nearby. Carlos kneels before her and proposes marriage. She accepts.

A sunny day. We see Nancy and Carlos packing suitcases. "Carlos hired the second best attorney in town to continue the grandmothers' crusade. He was coming back to my world. I promised to be his private teacher and get him through the California Bar exam."

Nancy hugs the Argentine scientists in the lab. "They would carry on as long as the government remained in power. Carlos donated his house to the scientists and the grandmothers to use in their struggle."

Nancy and Carlos are at the airport. Tears stream down her face as she's overwhelmed by a hundred grandmothers and children saying their affectionate good-byes.

"Their government could collapse any day. And they were getting older. But the stolen children would eventually reach the age of legal independence and no one would be able to stop them from looking for their families. And even if the grandmothers died, their HLA will have been typed and their mitochondrial DNA sequenced. Their legacy is safely stored. The record cannot be destroyed any longer."

"Whenever the children come searching for their true heritage, a lasting sign--spelled out in the alphabet of the genetic code--will point the way for them to be reunited with their legitimate families. No tyrants on earth could shatter these eternal family chains."

Gabrielle and Elsa give Nancy and Carlos a present from all the grandmothers. They are very touched and hug them good-bye.

Nancy and Carlos board the waiting jet. She pensively smiles as she looks out the window and sees the long line of grandmothers and children waving. The plane taxis down the runway.

"I know it sounds dippy, but I always wanted to do science for idealistic, relevant reasons. I guess it really is possible if you set out to do it that way from the beginning."

Her simple, school girl philosophy has now matured and blossomed into a life affirming reality for the "Grandmothers of the Disappeared."

THE END