

Drugs and corruption go together

Jesús Dávila

SAN JUAN/EDLP CORRESPONDENT — The link between drug trafficking and political corruption, so exposed over other Caribbean nations, is now denounced in respect to Puerto Rico by the most recent film starring Steven Bauer, a mix of reality and fiction, which surfaces just as Washington is considering revising the relationship with this nation submitted to a colonial condition.

"A film shows Puerto Rico as a port of entry for narcotics and it is believed it will provoke a political storm "

In fact, the film "*Ladrones y Mentirosos*" ("Thieves and Liars") lays out how Puerto Rico –the only Hispanic territory under United States jurisdiction– has since the nineties become a main port of entry for narcotics smuggling into the metropolitan nation just as the Puerto Rican political elite has also become corrupted.

This aspect of the feature length film opens for discussion to what point it is a security risk for the United States to insist maintaining sovereignty over this Caribbean nation, where because of language, culture and geography, society belongs more to Latin America than to the metropolitan nation.

The film was shown at a private screening in San Juan and will participate in several US festivals prior to being released to the general public, but it is already anticipated to stir up a storm in political circles, as in it Bauer plays a drug smuggler operating within a protection scheme of high ranking officials and corrupt politicians, specially the annexationists who were in power between 1992 and 2000. But it also hits the autonomist governments that followed, as it exposes how corruption cases end in nothing or with sentences too light for undue influence.

The film, budgeted at nearly \$1.5 million dollars and directed by Ricardo Méndez Matta, is based on a script by the filmmaker and his wife, Poli Marichal, who for years investigated Puerto Rican corruption cases and

their link with the use of the country as trans-shipment point for drugs sent from South America to the US.

To insure realism, the Los Angeles-based pair of investigative filmmakers went so deep into the world of drugs and corruption that they managed to film in the very docks used for real life smuggling and even attended meetings and dinners with prominent figures that are today under indictment.

A significant part of the script was also the result of data given to the producers by a well-known FBI and DEA informant, which brings to question the effectiveness of these agencies against the power wielded within the very own US by the large-scale narcotic drug importers.

(This is a translation of a Spanish language original that can be viewed at:
<http://www.eldiariony.com/noticias/detailnp.aspx?section=20&desc=NUESTROS%20PAISES&id=1343440>)