

# Two teens and a bad lucky goat

Film: Bad Lucky Goat

Director: Samir Oliveros

All Caribbean films must start with the waves, the sea. It's a rule that Bogotá-born director Samir Oliveros isn't about to break in his crowdfunded debut *Bad Lucky Goat*.

To be fair, his opening is novel. A decapitated goat's head floats peacefully by.

This was one of two films made on the same Colombian island screened at the TT Film Festival which ended yesterday.

Keyla was the other. Isla de Providencia's population of just 5,000 might be forgiven for wondering when the big guns in Hollywood will discover this sleepy patch of paradise.

Apart from a tame Carnival, horse races on the beach and clandestine jet-ski drug-running, not a lot happens here.

Which is why a missing goat is enough to rouse the excitement of Oliveros' fictional Port Paradise police force.

In fact, the goat is dead, accidentally run over by two warring teenage siblings — Corn, an aspiring musician, and his sister Rita, a girl aspiring to be a young woman — in their dad's pickup. Both teens are deeply irritating. I spent half the film wondering which one I disliked the most.

Corn (Honlenny Huffington) is blustering, petulant and unpredictable. Rita (Kiara Howard) is sullen, whiny and inexplicably wearing cheerleader socks and shorts. As the wibbling rivalry continues unabated in a mix of patois and pidgin English with a slight Spanish accent, their voices really do drain your lifeblood after a while.

As they fight over how to get back the money to pay for their dad's wrecked car and avoid comeuppance from the owner of the poor goat, they embark on a road trip.

If like me you find motorcycles reckless, you'll be steupsing. Rita reluctantly rides pillion. Gender norms, you know. We are treated to sumptuous shots of the island and beach but rarely allowed a moment to luxuriate before the calm is broken again.

Bad Lucky Goat bristles with short tempers that even a comedy musical interlude can't shift. Perhaps with the contrast of rootsy laid-back musicians, "We come here and keep the spiritual vibes going (mon)" against the other irascible islanders, the director is performing a cute exposé of the cliché of Caribbean life versus the reality.

The goat itself — a multifaceted animal in these parts utilised as food, sport, music (drum skins) and sometimes even love — is an animalistic microcosm of the Caribbean's comedic and demonic split personality.

Singer Elkin Robinson's cameo as anti-materialist Rasta, Brother Rainbow, hits the spot, as does Ambrosio Huffington's scarlet-haired pawnshop owner, Goldie — reminiscent of Bo Diddley in John Landis' cult classic Trading Places.

There is a nod to Gabriel Garcia Marquez's No One Writes To the Colonel (animal lovers, avert your gaze) and of coming-of-age movies like Stand By Me.

How will the pair, with milk still on their faces, negotiate interfering cops, tough guys and the duppy, to show their parents they are ready to be treated as adults?

This is a film about raw entrepreneurship and stifled creativity.

When the hot gossip of the day is a silly old goat's disappearance, but Corn wants his name up in lights, it's understandable that he feels like a caged bird in paradise.