



IGUALADA

FRANCIA MARQUEZ'S UNIMAGINABLE RUN for PRESIDENT of COLOMBIA

Sample Video: <https://vimeo.com/752117289/dbc87a7eaf>



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As unrest continues to boil over across Colombia, one determined woman has the courage to challenge an entrenched political establishment in the country's biggest stage. Against all odds, Francia Márquez, a black, rural community activist has launched a presidential campaign hoping her uncompromising appeal for justice can inspire a country to dream again.



IGUALADA comes from the word equal (*igual*)—it means someone who thinks of themselves equal to those that see themselves above her. It is a term loaded with racist and elitist connotations. But, Francia sees herself as the equal to the white families entrenched in Colombian politics for centuries. She will own and redefine that slur as she takes her fight for a more equal country to the biggest stage.

IGUALADA is a David and Goliath story. Francia Márquez is David, and the deeply entrenched Colombian political system is Goliath. Except in this case, Francia is a woman. And not a woman from the traditional political elite or the Colombian intelligentsia, but a rural, working class woman—a single mother born and raised far from the epicenters of Colombian politics. And not just a rural woman; but a Black, rural woman in a country built on a long history of structural racism and virulent discrimination.

Colombia has not had a female president—only a handful of women have ever even attempted a run. And the country has certainly never even had a Black presidential candidate. So, why does Francia Márquez think she can change Colombian history? In an election already crowded with establishment candidates from across the political spectrum, where does she get the audacity to throw her name into the ring?



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“I am not the daughter of a privileged family, I do not have the formation of the heirs of the 40 families that have governed this nation. On the contrary, I have been on the other side of the history of this country, that of exclusion, that of racialization and that of impoverishment... As a black woman I have learned how Colombia works from social struggles, from confronting the politics of death imposed by traditional politics that has used this logic as profit and gain... This dream, my dream, is to dare to challenge the status quo and to rewrite history from the oppressed, to rewrite history from the other side”.

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2020 saw violence escalate across Colombia. In addition to the continued assassinations of social leaders, massacres reminiscent to the 1990s, began headlining the news. The violence, combined with poverty and inequality exacerbated by the pandemic, drove many over the edge. Today, a general strike draws thousands of protesters into the streets across the country, shaking the foundations of the political landscape. It is precisely amidst this defining moment that Francia decided it was time to raise the stakes. And as Francia's bid for the presidency picks up speed, it threatens Colombia's political status quo—and as her popularity grows, so do the attacks against her.

Through exclusive access to the day-to-day of Francia's presidential run, **IGUALADA** aims to document the long road of a unique, almost unimaginable campaign launched against all odds. It is equivalent to being granted entry to the behind the scenes of a tense political thriller.

With privileged access, the film is intimately observational. We witness Francia and her team —most of whom have never run a campaign before— struggling to continue to push her candidacy forward as they tackle advertising, financing, debate planning, endorsements, and political strategy, along with her opponent's slanderous media campaigns.



There will be moments of tension, desperation and frustration, but also of joy, as Francia continues to make an impact poll after poll. These moments, as Francia's appeal grows and her campaign gains steam, provide the film with hopeful dynamism and drive. Still, even during these instances, we see Francia facing more and more threats. We witness intimate and vulnerable moments as Francia discusses her fears with her two children. And lonely instances of guilt when Francia questions if it is all truly worth it.

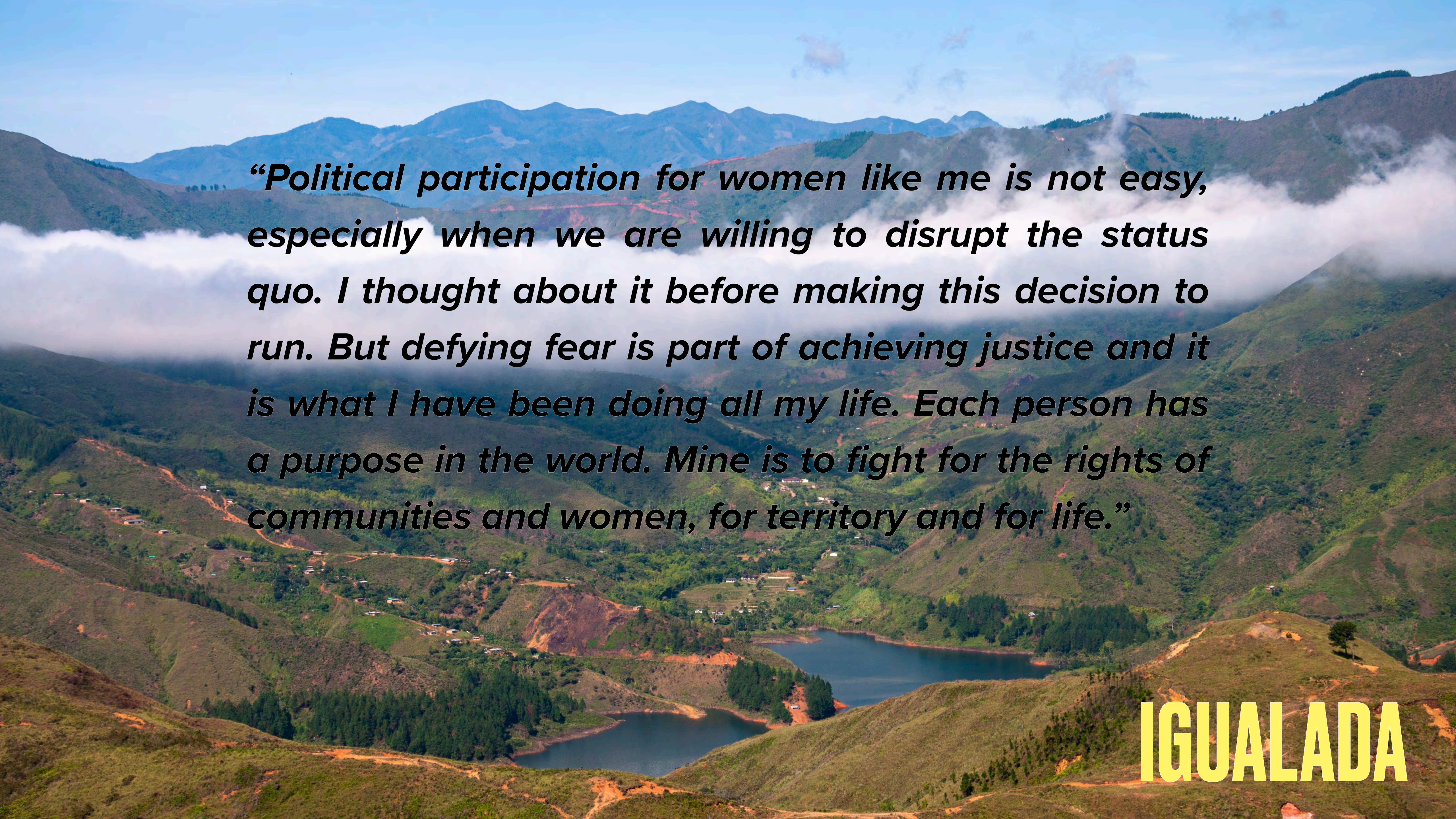
This is where **IGUALADA's** dramatic arch lives; in that space between the personal and the political. It's an arch that will develop naturally as Francia's campaign progresses. And through it all, there is a constant tension about what represents success in this moment.

Will the enthusiasm generated by Francia's announcement that she is running for president continue to spread and defy the odds? Will Francia become one of the last candidates standing and perhaps the most unlikely one ever elected as president in Colombia? Or will her campaign, led by a committed yet inexperienced team, topple under the financial demands of a contest of this magnitude?

IGUALADA grants us intimate, unprecedented access to one woman's dream to change her country and her unimaginable journey to take on a deeply entrenched political dynasty.



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“Political participation for women like me is not easy, especially when we are willing to disrupt the status quo. I thought about it before making this decision to run. But defying fear is part of achieving justice and it is what I have been doing all my life. Each person has a purpose in the world. Mine is to fight for the rights of communities and women, for territory and for life.”

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IN THE END The success of Francia's campaign and the movement growing around her, hinged on the March 13th primary elections. Candidates from the main parties on the Left, Center and Right held primaries to pick their presidential candidates. Francia participated in the primaries of the Left wing coalition, the Historic Pact. The face of the coalition, Gustavo Petro, with a long political career and decades of experience (he was a presidential candidate on two previous occasions and the mayor of Bogotá) was the overwhelming favorite and far ahead in every poll.

Francia had progressively moved up in the polls herself and was now polling second in her coalition— no small feat. But it remained unclear whether the enthusiasm generated by her campaign would translate at the polls. In this sense, the March 13th primaries would deliver judgement on Francia's political position and the real dimension of the movement she had created.

As the results began coming in, it was clear Francia had deeply changed Colombian politics. In the end, not only did Francia receive nearly 800,000 votes, but she was the third most voted candidate of all three coalitions. She received more votes than power-house traditional (white and male) candidates with decades of political experience seeking nominations in both the Left and Right coalitions. And even though Gustavo Petro emerged as the big winner of the night in terms of votes, all Colombia could talk about was how a Black woman, social leader, from a small village in a war-torn region of Colombia had dramatically shifted the country's paradigms and become the political phenom of the moment.

Francia voted that very day in her home village and then flew to Bogotá to await the results. The drama that unfolded as votes began coming in, the huge surprise of Francia's voting numbers, and the mass joy it elicited from that social movement that backs her, provide a beautiful and hopeful ending for our film. One that reflects how deeply the country is changing and highlights the story of a once-in a lifetime campaign with Francia's uncompromising appeal for justice as the code for a country that allows itself to dream again.

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A woman with dark skin is sitting on a wide, reddish-brown concrete step. She is wearing a blue and white patterned off-the-shoulder top and bright pink shorts. She is holding a brown chicken in her left arm. She is looking upwards and to the left with a thoughtful expression. The background is a weathered, light brown wall with a window featuring metal bars.

“I believe that we must let go of the fear and dare ourselves to think of a country that builds true unity. A unity that cares for life. It is time to abandon the politics of death and think of ourselves collectively as a people”.

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THE TEAM



JUAN MEJIA BOTERO, Director

Juan is an award-winning film director with 25 years of experience in feature documentaries and documentary series. His work has focused primarily on struggles for social justice around the world. Most recently, Juan has produced a number of episodes for Netflix's, *Amend: The Fight for America*, and ABC's, *Soul of a Nation*.



MARCO WILLIAMS, Exec. Producer

Marco is an award-winning filmmaker and film professor at Northwestern University. He has been nominated three times for the Sundance Film Festival grand jury prize. His most recent film *The Undocumented*, was a PBS broadcast feature documentary addressing the deaths of illegal border crossers in Arizona.



SONIA SERNA, Producer

Sonia is a Colombian feminist and anthropologist. Her scholarly and activist experience has focused on community-based work, gendered and racialized dispossession, and sexual and reproductive justice. Her work has also included field production in Colombia and South America, English-Spanish translation, editing, and advocacy for social movements.

THE TEAM



JUAN E. YEPES, Producer

Juan Esteban is a film producer with experience in business management and project entrepreneurship. His production experience has focused on documentary filmmaking and short films with a social impact angle. Juan has produced work in Cambodia, Thailand, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Colombia, Peru, and several locations in the United States.



KAREN GOMEZ, Cinematographer

Karen is a Colombian content creator, cinematographer, and director of photography. Her experience has focused on documentary projects dealing with environmental, arts, youth, sports, and human rights topics. Karen has worked with established Colombian producers such as FOX Telecolombia, Señal Colombia, Canal Capital y Canal 13. She was nominated in 2018 for the India Catalina Award for best photography.



DANIELA ALATORRE, Producer

Daniela is an accomplished Mexican filmmaker. In 2019 she produced the feature documentary *Midnight Family*, which got the Jury Award for Best Cinematography at Sundance Film Festival and more than 40 other awards. She co-produced the documentary *Users*, which earned the Jury Award for Best Director at the Sundance Film Festival, and she also produced *A Cop Movie*, winner of the Silver Bear for artistic contribution at the Berlinale.



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